

Realms of Necessities, Possibilities and Evaluations in Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*

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1. Introduction

The limits of my language stand for the limits of my world.
Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus'

1.1 Introduction and personal motivation

Language is our basic tool when communicating interpretations and evaluations of the world. At the same time, humans envision and evaluate their realities through a continuous process of making assessments and comparing their own evaluations and knowledge to the information they have available, thus offering their own versions of the world through particular linguistic expressions. Some texts, particularly literary texts, comprise a multitude of utterances that communicate modal meanings concerned with what is possible or necessary in the real or imaginary world, largely due to the fact that fiction offers writers the liberty to create and express attitudes towards generated realities and experiences.

Language serves what we may call an interpersonal function... the speaker is using language as the means of his own intrusion into the speech event: the expression of his comments, his attitudes, and evaluations, and also of the relationship that he sets up between himself and the listener... (Halliday 1996: 58)

I believe that literature is to a certain extent the product of its social and historical context and it is through language that we are able to determine people's thoughts, ideas and preoccupations, which are inevitably representative of a particular context and time.

The demands that we make on language, as speakers and writers, listeners and readers, are indefinitely many and varied. They can be derived, ultimately, from a small number of general headings; but what these headings are will depend on what questions we are asking. (Halliday 1996: 57)

Thus, the functions of the language depend largely on what we are looking for and what we decide to focus on when investigating language's multitudinous facets. Moreover, one vital function language performs is to encode the writer's account of facts and events of the world, and by investigating his lexical choices we are able to uncover the underlying messages that are being communicated in the discourse.

It is my belief that fiction, to varying degrees, is created out of the social consciousness of a historical period of time, making history and fiction closely intertwined. Fiction is one form of trying to make sense of life's happenings, of present and past events; with the help of certain linguistic expressions writers are able to provide their own picture of the world together with the available knowledge they have for their representations and interpretations of particular realities. Modal expressions are a wonderful way of talking about the world as it is, as it should be or as it could be; it reflects a variety of possible and/or necessary worlds, which allows both the writer and the reader to go beyond the real world and envision alternative versions of it. The phenomenon of imagining things that are not real, but possible and/or necessary is one of the most exhilarating features of the human awareness and reasoning, and it is undeniably one thing that makes modality such an exciting area of study. It represents the way people structure the information about the world, assess it and assign values to it.

We study language partly in order to understand language and how it works, and partly in order to understand what people do with it. The two questions are connected: the way language is organised has been determined, over the million and more years of its evolution, by the functions it is called on to serve. Like any other tool, it is shaped by its purposes. (Halliday&Hasan 1989: 44)

It is, therefore, fascinating to look at literature through a linguistic investigation; such a study allows us to gain insight not only into the mind of the author, but also into a social and historical consciousness of a particular period of time, making us take a retrospective look at the past and marvel at all the things emblematic of that time. Language can therefore be considered as a “bi-planar system mapping forms on meanings.” (Toolan 1996: 121) The forms reflect principally the motivating semantic contents which offer us the writer's understanding of the world. I have always been fascinated by the way humans perceive the world in terms of what is necessary and possible and how these perceptions influence their life experiences. This interdependence between language and the underlying semantic backdrop is beautifully revealed in novels, where we can judge characters based on the way they talk and act, and correspondingly the linguistic choices narrators make for their characters in order to convey values and beliefs they consider fundamental for their lives.

One aspect of language through which we can express our interpretations and perspectives is modality, as it is concerned with the speaker's judgements about the world and the relationship between the speaker and the state of affairs communicated through modal expressions. But the problem with modality is that there is no clear agreement about its definitions and characteristics. The notion of modality is fairly vague and thus leaves room for plenty of potential definitions, but we shall regard modality as indicating the 'opinion or attitude of the speaker', a notion pertaining to Lyons (1977: 452). The term 'modality' covers three categories of qualification: deontic modality, dynamic modality, and epistemic modality. (Palmer 1986) We are interested in the latter.

Epistemic modality involves the notions of possibility and necessity, which indicate the speaker's level of commitment to what he says. The term is derived from the Greek word meaning 'understanding' or 'knowledge', "and so is to be interpreted as showing the status of the speaker's understanding or knowledge; this clearly includes both his judgements and the kind of warrant he has for what he says." (Palmer 1986: 51) When talking about epistemic modality, Palmer makes a distinction between judgements and evidentials; while judgements only express the speaker's position, evidentials also encode the source of that position¹. Hence, if it explicitly refers to the source of information it represents an evidential, if there is no mention of the source, we deal with a judgement. But the borderlines between the two are rather loose and, as Palmer remarks,

It would be a futile exercise to try to decide whether a particular system (or even a term in a system in some cases) is evidential rather than a judgement. There is often no clear distinction because speakers' judgements are naturally often related to the evidence they have. (1986: 70)

Therefore, in our present study we take a very broad approach to epistemic modality and consider both judgements and evidentials to represent epistemic devices used by the speaker to specify his/her commitment to the truth of what is being said, and which also point to the subjectivity² of any epistemic modal expression. The intricacy that arises when talking about evidentiality and the source of the speaker's knowledge is quite challenging. In order to

¹ Palmer lists four ways that the speaker can express judgements and evidentials and not facts: 1) he is speculating about something, 2) he is presenting something as a deduction, 3) he has been told about something, 4) or that something is a matter of appearance, based on the evidence of his senses. (1986:51)

² We talk about subjectivity as part of epistemic modality in Chapter 2, section 2.1, pp.16-17.

understand the practicalities of evidential meanings in discourse, we also try to be aware of the fact that while we use language to talk about the things we know, we are not consciously engaged in an active assessment of the sources of that knowledge all the time. Most often, our attitudes are the expression of subtle, subconscious factors that influence our perception of our social and cultural contexts. And so, in our study we will regard evidentiality as part of the subjective nature of the speaker's utterances; in addition to the way speakers have come to know what they know, it is of significance to consider the context in which they have chosen to express that knowledge.

In real life situations it is often difficult to identify one particular source from which some knowledge is acquired. Much of the information we know about is acquired through exposure from more than one source. (Mushin 2001: 55)

Our view of epistemicity is then an all-encompassing one. We will consider epistemic any proposition that communicates the speaker's opinion or attitude, and the speaker's level of commitment to what s/he says will be determined by the evidence s/he has for his/her utterances. It follows then that we integrate evidentiality and subjectivity as central aspects of any commitment to the truth of the speaker's proposition.

At the same time, as many interpretations of the world are the product of social and interpersonal roles people have in relation to others, it contributes to making characters in the novel become socially identifiable through the utterances others make about them through the voice of the narrator, based on the role they have in their social circle. This is one of the things that we are trying to identify in our novel, where the main characters find themselves at liberty to express, very often with a high degree of commitment, their own attitudes to other characters. In this regard, of particular relevance are the verbs of cognitive attitude, a term we borrow from Cappelli (2007), whose semantics deals with the notions of possibility, probability, as well as certainty and commitment, and which fall under the category of epistemic stance. We will, therefore, investigate three of this set of the verbs, *know*, *think* and *believe*, in the light of their function as markers of epistemic stance employed by speakers to make comments on the status of the information that they qualify.

In our analysis of this category of verbs, we will make use of the cognitive-pragmatic approach, where by looking at three verbs of cognitive attitude we will try to determine how their semantic and pragmatic features account for the characters' knowledge and outlooks in the novel. At the core of the cognitive-pragmatic approach lies what Nuyts (2000) calls 'human conceptualisation', which includes "mechanisms for achieving world knowledge, reasoning mechanisms which relate and combine chunks of knowledge to make logical inferences, deductions, etc.... or which select and prepare information derived from perception for integration in the store of conceptual knowledge." (Nuyts 2000: 6) What we investigate then in a discourse is the linguistic elements that can help us establish the knowledge and mechanisms that characters operate with in the text and the mental and cognitive connections characters make between the described realities and their own interpretations.

In addition, when dealing with people's interpretations of their circumstances, we cannot leave out one significant aspect of systemic-functional grammar³, namely appraisal theory, which deals with how the speaker/writer values the entities (people and things) within the text that they produce. (Martin&White 2005) Appraisal is mainly concerned with the emotions that emerge from "people's perceptions of their circumstances – immediate, imagined, or remembered." (Ellsworth&Scherer 2003: 572) Thinking is to a certain degree connected to feelings, which means that certain ways of construing our environments are intrinsically emotional. We take as our point of departure the theory that experience of a situation is essentially an emotional experience, and that emotions emerge as a result of people's appraisal of their circumstances. Appraisal's relevance for our analysis lies in its use of semantics rather than grammar, providing us with a valuable "framework with which to analyse the negotiation of interpersonal and social relations in text." (Lynne&Harrison 2004: 254)

One of the main reasons why I decided to carry out this study and investigate the way modal meanings reflect values and beliefs pertaining to the American dream, mirrored by the main

³ Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language based on the notion of language function. While SFL is concerned with the syntactic structure of language, it centers primarily on the function of language (what language does, and how it does it). SFL starts from social context, and examines how language both acts upon, and is controlled by, this social context. (Halliday 1994)

character's life in *American Pastoral*, is because I believe that language is a social and cultural phenomenon. Besides reflecting the cultural and historical context they derive from, and a particular social consciousness, the language of a novel introduces us to a magnificent world of possibilities, where the writer, through his characters, offers us alternative ways of how things can be, could be, must be, might be, should be, etc. This capacity to imagine and express things beyond the apparent facts of reality is indeed at the core of the meanings expressed by modality, which is abundantly present in many literary texts, and which also represents a means of interpreting and evaluating life itself.

Another reason for this study is that I am highly fascinated by the concept of the American dream; it has emerged as an endeavour to give expression to the human potential and it used to represent the hope and belief that everything is possible if one puts in enough effort and hard work in its realization. Materialism signified only the result of the idealist creed in merit and excellence. Today the myth of the American idealism is highly disputed, but I believe it is a fascinating concept, and it represents an undeniably momentous type of social and historical consciousness in American history.

Philip Roth is today one of the most productive and decorated writers of the world. In May 2011, he was the winner of the fourth Man Booker International Prize, "the newest jewel in his crown of literary awards." (Ivanova 2011: 9) Reprinted in the prestigious "Library of America" series, his fiction is integrated into the American literary canon. As the first in Philip Roth's best-selling American Trilogy and a Pulitzer Prize winner, *American Pastoral* (published in 1997) has acquired a lot of critical attention in the thirteen years since its publication. Many critics have examined the novel for its remarks on identity, some with an emphasis on the identity of the nation due to the novel's prophetic setting and the demise of the American dream, others focused on the protagonist's denial of his ethnic/Jewish identity. (Hobbs 2010: 69)

American Pastoral is the perfect text for the linguistic goals of our study, since we are greatly concerned with the way people interpret their environments, how they evaluate and organize events and experiences, and how they consequently express particular attitudes and react to those events and experiences with certain kinds of emotions.

Few novels are more acute in revealing our propensity for seeing what we want to see, and how reluctantly we recalibrate our vision in the face of new learnings. In this regard, *American Pastoral* joins those exquisite fictions of the past—*Emma*, *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and *The Golden Bowl* come to mind—that force us into painful examination of our stubborn insistence on deceiving ourselves. (Gioia 2009: 7)

Since readers are earnestly encouraged in the novel to admit that there is no ultimate truth and that there is no right and wrong, Gioia's remark points to one essential element we will take into account when analysing our text, and that is the subjectivity of most of the novel's propositions.

In *American Pastoral* Philip Roth tries to ask questions about the validity of the American dream and the values it epitomizes; the language that he uses when arguing potential answers is what this study will focus on. Most of the meanings communicated in the novel arise out of the relationships between social contexts and their historical developments. Since *American Pastoral* makes direct references to the late-sixties riots in American history, it is essential that we consider the historical context of the novel and how its linguistic structures uncover the peculiarities of life at that time.

Language is a tool to convey meaning. The structure of language is shaped by our cognitive abilities as human beings on the one hand and by communication on the other. It is the historical product of communication activities in specific cultures and communities, and constrained by our physical and cognitive affordances... Since both universal and language-specific structures are the product of history, they can be best explained through diachrony, that is, through the process by which they came into being. (Narrog 2012: 4)

Moreover, many critics regard *American Pastoral* as the “mourning of the greatest generation” (Stanley 2005: 3), which is exemplified by the novel's protagonist and whose life is described with a nostalgic and elegiac voice by Roth's narrator. Many of the linguistic expressions in the novel have as their main intention to portray this sentimental view of the American democracy, and of the ‘greatest American generation’ respectively, but also the way their values were in conflict with the values of the sixties activism in America. By locating the linguistic expressions used by characters in the novel, we intend to investigate

the way they are representative of certain beliefs and values, and which in turn expose viewpoints of whole generations.

1.2 Aim of the study and structure of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to carry out an empirically driven interdisciplinary study which combines analyses of epistemic modality, epistemic stance and appraisal in the novel *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth. The study is meant to illustrate the way epistemic modality, stance and appraisal are used to communicate values and beliefs held dear by the main characters of the novel which are archetypally associated with the concept of the American dream; it thus attempts to uncover the cognitive and evaluative systems and processes that must be at work when speakers in the novel express evaluations of a state of affairs.

The central assumption of this research paper is that modality, particularly epistemic modality, represents a significant aspect of language available for humans to express propositions concerned with necessities and possibilities about the world and the values they hold dear; besides, when communicating our own understanding of the realities we tend to assign some evaluation to it, which can be cognitive or emotional in nature. We will try to reveal how some of these linguistic choices in the novel reflect or are closely related to specific American concepts and feelings. Thus, this investigation aims to achieve in-depth insights into the status of epistemic modality and epistemic stance as a semantic category.

This thesis has two main chapters; one (Chapter 2) explores extensively epistemic modality, stance and appraisal, where we try to provide an overview over the definitions and types of epistemic modality and stance in the literature, looking at the epistemic modal verbs and adverbs, explore previous research on the verbs of cognitive attitude, and offer a brief overview of the theory of appraisal. In Chapter 3, we work closely with excerpts from the novel and draw extensively on the epistemic, cognitive and emotional language mentioned in Chapter 2, trying to establish their relational nature with the concepts related to the American dream, but also with Philip Roth's sentimental view when describing his protagonist.

1.3 Material and method

American Pastoral, published first in 1997, is the twenty-second book by Philip Roth, one of the prominent twentieth-century American writers. This long novel, mythic in scope, examines the development of American history from the late 1940s, which Roth's narrator and alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman, considers a golden period, to the social mayhems that marked the 1960s and early 1970s. The main character of the story is Seymour Levov, who everybody calls “the Swede” because of his fair complexion, blond hair, and blue eyes. He is an exceptional man in every respect – distinguished athlete, successful businessman, loyal husband and father—whose only ambition is to live a serene, pastoral life in rural Old Rimrock, New Jersey.

But his uncontrollable sixteen-year-old daughter, Merry, gets caught up in the anti-Vietnam War crusade and plants a bomb at the local post office. The Swede's peaceful life is crushed forever, and for the rest of his life, as the novel crisscrosses its way back and forth in time, the Swede tries to understand what went wrong. In his attempt to understand how post-World War II America could yield the violence and disorder of the 1960s, Roth explores, with profundity, pensiveness, and compassion, issues such as Jewish assimilation, community belonging, familial devotion, and political radicalism.

By looking at the epistemic use of modal verbs such as *must*, *need*, *should*, *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will* and *would*, epistemic modal adverbs such as *certainly*, *probably*, *possibly*, *perhaps*, *maybe* and *likely*, the verbs of cognitive attitude *think*, *believe* and *know*, and the lexical items meant to uncover the characters' emotional world, we will try to establish some typical patterns employed in the novel describing the Swede's life, which is meant to reveal a particular American social consciousness. In addition, Roth uses another character in the novel, Merry, the Swede's daughter, who gets involved in the late 1960s riots⁴ and who defies all rules and values that are at the core of her father's life.

⁴ The activism of the late 1960s and early 1970s refers to an anti-establishment cultural phenomenon that first emerged in the United States and the United Kingdom, later spreading to other Western countries, and which gained momentum with the growth of the US government's broad military involvement in Vietnam. Post-war prosperity allowed many of the counterculture generation to look beyond the concern with material necessities of life that had preoccupied their parents. As the 1960s activism advanced, extensive social tensions developed all throughout the US and the new generation's focus was mainly along the lines regarding the US intervention in Vietnam, race relations, conventional ways of authority, and divergent interpretations of the American dream.

Epistemic modality, epistemic stance and emotional attitude employed in the novel then will be seen as socially sanctioned representations of the external world. By having as a premise the theory that language, as means of communication, reflects a common attitude and “conventionally accepted ways of looking at the world” (Widdowson 1996:143-144), we will underline the significance of social and historical contextualisation of the novel in terms of epistemic necessities and possibilities, and the issues they render in the novel. Since there is a lot of controversial wrangling when it comes to the concept of style, our approach to stylistics will follow the one adopted by Leech and Short (2007), as it suits best our study, given that their approach makes extensive use of both systemic-functional linguistics and narrative theory.

My greatest fascination with language lies in its encoding of meaning. The study of meaning has been one of the most controversial issues among linguists, philosophers, and psychologists alike. It is a problematic field of study, but also one of the most exciting ones. All studies of meaning take under investigation the relationship words and their forms have with the fundamental meaning they express; the terms and meanings we assign to our surroundings reflect the way we organize our perceptions, interpretations and knowledge about the world. For the Greek philosophers the semantic relationship between words and things was the relationship of naming; and so, speakers of the language associate the forms of words with certain things and concepts. The problem arises, though, when the meaning of a word can be communicated or transferred to another. Traditional semantics encourages subjectivism and introspection in the investigation of meaning. But, unfortunately, traditional semantics does not give full theoretical recognition to the relevance of context. In our study, however, we regard context as being of paramount significance when interpreting meaning. In order for us to make sense of the utterances we investigate in the novel, we need to bear in mind that any discourse consists of a scheme which is largely based on a particular way of organizing and arranging concepts, establishing relationships between them, so that we can get an orderly assessment of the world.

Epistemicity is primarily concerned with meaning; we take as a starting point well-defined categories, as “we must first of all decide whether a particular element has meaning before we ask what meaning it has” (Lyons 1968: 412), but we also depart occasionally from the

conventional definitions of particular modal and stance operators in order to investigate closer contextual significances of particular expressions. In addition, the context of an utterance is not merely recognized in “the spatiotemporal situation in which it occurs: it must be held to include, not only the relevant objects and actions taking place at the time, but also the knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer of what has been said earlier, in so far as this is pertinent to the understanding of the utterance.” (Lyons 1968: 412-413) We take then into consideration the overall meanings and messages of the novel, drawing on both our comprehensive understanding of the text and well-defined categories.

1.4 Theoretical background and previous research

One significant theoretical framework within which several linguistic and literary studies were carried out is systemic-functional linguistics, which regards language as a social phenomenon that reflects human experience, and also “as a resource of fundamental importance in the building of human experience.” (Halliday&Hasan 1989: v) Language is not only a product of human experience and the manner in which we create and systematise this experience, but it is also profoundly involved in constructing meanings.

To study language then, is to concentrate upon exploring how it is systematically patterned towards important social ends... In this sense, to study language is to explore some of the most important and pervasive of the processes by which human beings build their world. (Halliday&Hasan 1989: vii)

Systemic-functional linguistics is a useful tool in the investigation of the novel’s language as reflection of its social and historical context, and it can facilitate our understanding of the underlying semantic contents that have as linguistic forms epistemic modality and epistemic stance.

One noteworthy feature of systemic-functional linguistics is the fact that it “permits useful movement across the text, addressing the manner in linguistic patternings built up for the construction of the overall text in its particular ‘genre’, shaped as it is in response to the context of situation which gave rise to it.” (Halliday&Hasan 1989: ix) This aspect proves to be a valuable tool in our investigation, as it is the social and cultural aspect of the novel we intend to uncover through its epistemic modality and stance. Stylistics is also part of our

investigation, as it exposes the author's linguistic choices and the way they affect the meanings of the text.

One of the most important studies to combine systemic-functional linguistics and literary analysis is the one carried out by Halliday (1996), where he analyses language in William Golding's *The Inheritors*. Halliday remarks the importance of semantics in the study of style, which leads us to consider the functional theory of language and its relevance for the investigation of literature. By a functional theory of language he means the one where the linguistic structures and phenomena give us insight not only into the nature and use of the language itself, but particularly into the context of the stylistic studies.

He also looks at a fundamental function of the language, which he calls ideational, and which "serves for the expression of content... it is through this function that the speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena of the real world... in serving this function, language lends structure to his experience and helps to determine his way of looking at things." (Halliday 1996: 58) Halliday investigates the linguistic choices that Golding has made by looking mainly at the selection of verbs and transitivity patterns. He remarks that regardless of the type of function the linguistic choices derive from, they are all meaningful.

Some other similar studies, merging linguistic and literary analyses, are the ones carried out by Nina Nørgaard (2003), who investigates the three metafunctions in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Two Gallants*; Chris Kennedy (1982), who also focuses on transitivity patterns in Joseph Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent* and James Joyce's short story *Two Gallants*; besides, Ruqaiya Hasan (1989) analyses among others Angus Wilson's short story *Necessity's Child* and emphasises how the linguistic choices in the story point to its general theme.

All these studies have as postulation that linguistic choices in literary works are meaningful, and that they are all stylistic. By looking at epistemic modality and epistemic stance as one significant and meaningful aspect of the language in *American Pastoral*, we will try to determine the underlying semantics and explore the social contexts the epistemic expressions emerge from and the purpose they serve in the text. Language is heavily influenced by

situational, experiential and social factors and the convergence of linguistic and literary analyses can prove to be a wonderful means in the investigation of the nature of human experience, as language is part of both imparting and constructing that experience.

2. Epistemicity and evaluation – theoretical overview

In this chapter we will briefly examine previous research within epistemic modality, with the focus on the epistemic use of modal verbs and adverbs (section 2.1) and within epistemic stance, with the focus on verbs of cognitive attitude (section 2.2). We will indicate how epistemic modality can be useful in the analysis of a novel (section 2.3) and will reveal the significance of a cognitive-pragmatic approach to discourse analysis (section 2.4). In addition, we will indicate how affect, which is a subdivision of the category of attitude within appraisal theory, belongs in a study such as ours (section 2.5).

2.1 Epistemic modal verbs and adverbs

Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree.

Ezra Pound: 'How to Read'

Modality represents one of the areas of study that remains most fascinating and challenging for theorists, academics, philosophers and linguists alike. It inspires and at the same time stirs a lot of controversy around its definitions and characteristics; because of its elusive nature it provides us with interminable possibilities of interpretations and conceptual clarifications. It has been one of the most dynamic areas of linguistic studies in the past decade, given its utmost significance for language and communication.

Von Wright (1951) and Lyons (1968; 1977) were the first to contribute with significant efforts in the study of modality. But it was after the 1980s that the study of this field achieved wide undertakings, largely due to the research of Palmer (1986) in functional and typological linguistics and Kratzer (1977; 1981) in formal semantics. Being rather “a conceptual domain instead of a grammatical category”, it explains why the interest in modality came much later. (Narrog 2012: 1)

Modality is one of the ‘golden oldies’ among the basic notions in the semantic analysis of language. But, in spite of this, it also remains one of the most problematic and controversial notions: there is no consensus on how to define and characterise it, let alone how to apply definitions in the empirical analysis of data. (Nuyts 2005: 5)

We imagine and talk about the world by using the system of *tense* (placing events on the time scale), *aspect* (placing events on the duration scale) and the system of *modality*, which allows us to talk about events that may not have happened, but which are wanted, required, needed

or possible. However, Nuyts claims that modality should not be considered on the same level of study as tense and aspect, that modality represents a “higher order category.” (2005:5)

Modality is a linguistic category referring to the factual status of a proposition. A proposition is modalized if it is marked for being undetermined with respect to its factual status, i.e. is neither positively nor negatively factual. (Narrog 2012: 6)

The advantage of this definition of modality is that it covers the basic modal meanings of necessity, obligation, possibility or probability. Moreover, modality is concerned with the speaker’s judgements about the world, which cannot be a reality outside their language. It is consequently factual propositions that are the starting point when analysing modal expressions: all propositions that are not factual in nature can either be possible or necessary.

As mentioned in our introductory chapter, the term ‘modality’ typically covers three categories of qualifications. Besides epistemic modality, this involves deontic modality, as well as dynamic modality. (Palmer 1986) Deontic modality is an evaluation of the moral accessibility, desirability or necessity of a state of affairs, i.e. it crucially involves notions such as ‘allowance’, ‘permission’ and ‘obligation’. Dynamic modality involves an attribution of a capacity or a need to the subject-participant in the state of affairs, or of a situation-internal possibility or necessity for him/her to do something. (Nuyts 2000: 25)

Epistemic modality is different from dynamic and deontic modality in being completely speaker-oriented, and even though there are common semantic elements characterising all three types of modality, they are not specific only of the category of modality, which do not warrant then their categorisation. Epistemic meanings emerge in the linguistic properties where there is “a strong implicature that what the speaker says is representative of her beliefs/conclusions, and her/his attitude.” (Mushin 2001: 11) Besides, we need to mention the relevance of deictic forms⁵ in narrative analysis, which lies in the prospect of getting ‘perspective’ over the world of different characters, as they know different things, have access to different communicating situations, and present only a fraction of an ‘objective’ world through their own thoughts and perceptions.

⁵ Deixis represents a significant category in the study of language and has been investigated by Lyons (1977) among others. It denotes all linguistic signs that offer clues about the orientation of the speaker’s position, which mostly include references to the time and place of the events and the identity of the participants with regard to the actual speech situations.

When talking about epistemic modality, we need to talk about subjectivity as well.

Subjectivity in English-speaking linguistics was chiefly established by Lyons, whose view on subjectivity (1977; 1995) is considered to be the main point of reference in modality studies. Lyons' view of subjectivity is pragmatically oriented and of significance for our study. For Lyons, subjectivity is important for linguistics in the form of 'locutionary subjectivity', or the expression of the self in the use of language. (Lyons 1995: 337) He regards subjectivity as the result of the speaker's present and past social and personal/relational roles, and "it manifests itself in a socially identifiable way." (Ibid: 339) Lyons considers that any sentence with a modal verb is devoid of subjectivity and that subjectivity is simply added by the speaker in a particular context. We adopt this view when determining the epistemic use of modal verbs and adverbs in the novel; it would be almost impossible to do that without taking into consideration the context of the modal expressions and refer them to the whole text, and also our knowledge and familiarity with the novel in its entirety.

Furthermore, besides the pragmatic view on subjectivity, which identifies it principally with the speaker's commitment and context, there is the conceptualist view, which identifies it largely with form (structure). An even further alternative suggested by Nuyts' work, later developed by Portner (2009), is the one that elaborates on the aspect of 'source of knowledge'. Instead of the 'speaker commitment' aspect of Lyons' subjectivity, otherwise called performative⁶, Nuyts expounds on the 'source of knowledge' aspect of subjectivity and views subjectivity as "an 'evidential' dimension of linguistic expressions, referring to whether the speaker suggests that s/he alone knows the evidence and draws a conclusion from it ('subjective'), or the speaker 'indicates that the evidence is known to (or accessible by) a larger group of people who share the conclusion based on it', thus leading to 'shared responsibility' (intersubjective)." (Narrog 2012: 28) As we will see later in Chapter 3, many propositions in the novel are highly intersubjective, as speakers make frequent references to evidence accessible to a larger group of people than the ones involved in the communication situation.

⁶ Nuyts differentiates between expressions which report on an epistemic qualification of a state of affairs without involving speaker commitment to it at the moment of speaking, called **descriptive**; and epistemic forms which communicate the speaker's present attitude towards the state of affairs, which do not involve his/her commitment to the qualification at the moment of speaking, called **performative**. (2000:39)

Portner (2009) marks epistemic judgements on the basis of knowledge of just one speaker as ‘subjective’, and judgements on the basis of knowledge of two or more speakers as ‘intersubjective’. Huddleston (2002:181) seems to have the same view as Nuyts and Portner when suggesting that epistemic subjective uses make available the ‘speaker’s knowledge’ rather than ‘public knowledge’. And as we mentioned earlier, Palmer also has an evidential-like idea of subjectivity in epistemic modality, but unlike Nuyts, Portner, and Huddleston, he considers this kind of subjectivity not only a feature of epistemic modality, but a defining one.

In our investigation we will focus on epistemic modality and epistemic stance as the general manifestation of evidential, subjective and intersubjective propositions; we will try to determine the degree of the speaker’s commitment depending on the source of knowledge and availability of the evidence. Moreover, all interpretations of epistemicity will have a very broad reading and the context will turn out to be decisive in our clarifications.

Traditional research has focused on modal concepts almost exclusively in terms of the modal auxiliaries *can, could, might, may, will, would, shall, should* and *must*. The main reason for this is that they represent the class of the most grammaticalized exponents of the modal system and are liable to succinct investigations. Semantically, modal auxiliaries are considered to be quantifiers over possible worlds. (Kratzer 1981) These possible worlds are imaginable and potential ways the world could be. The same modals can have many significations, depending on their context. However, an investigation of the modal auxiliaries undertaken by Leech (2003), who analyses comparable datasets from around 1961 to 1991, concludes that the English modal auxiliaries as a group have been declining significantly in their frequency of use.

This is where the need to embrace additional types of modal expressions come into the picture, something that has been recognized as a necessity for some time. Studies carried out by Biber et al. (1999), Coates (1983), and Palmer (1986) have included at least two or more expressions from the wider modal range, such as: modal idioms (*had better, would rather, would sooner*); modal adverbs (*certainly, clearly, evidently, obviously*); modal-adverb collocations (*couldn’t possibly, would inevitably, must surely*); adjectival frames (*it is likely,*

possible/sure that); and modal lexical verbs (*doubt, reckon, believe*). (Hoye 2009: 117) We will not concern ourselves with these additional types of modal expressions in our study, though.

However, it is worth pointing out that all these investigations have successfully demonstrated that modality represents a very complex system where speakers have an infinite range of choices of modal expressions. At the same time, Nuyts (2000) tries to relate subjectivity to specific expression types, but since his concept of modality differs from the conceptualist approach, the form types related to subjectivity are distinctive. In the conceptualist view of modality, modals are regarded as the most subjective expressions, followed by adverbs and mental state predicates. Nuyts, however, while suggesting that modal adverbs and adjectives, mental state predicates, and modal auxiliaries are the major expression types of modality, proposes that mental state predicates are primarily to be identified with subjectivity, while modal adjectives are related to intersubjectivity, leaving modal adverbs and modal auxiliaries outside the subjectivity aspect of modality. (Nuyts 2000: 29) And so, in case of those expressions that are not customarily linked to either subjectivity or intersubjectivity, context plays a crucial role, an approach we also adopt here.

And while there is a clear contrast between the pragmatic approach, which positions mental predicates highest in terms of subjectivity, and the conceptualist approach, which positions the modals highest and mental predicates lowest, modal adverbs seem to present a problematic issue. Traditionally adverbs have been considered highly subjective in nature, if not the most subjective modal markers. (Hengeveld 1988: 236) One reason why epistemic adverbs pose a problem is the lack of explicit semantic measures (Wierzbicka 2006: 247) for their interpretation; most of the studies concerned with epistemic adverbs were the ones comparing them in English with those in other languages, such as Dutch and German, as is the case of Nuyts (2000).

The literature dealing with epistemic adverbs traditionally focus on their syntax rather than their meanings or uses. In her investigation, Wierzbicka demonstrates that “all the differences, as well as similarities, between the individual epistemic adverbs can be explained clearly, intelligibly, and in a way that can be tested against the intuitions of native speakers,

in semantic explications based essentially on the concepts *know* and *think* and, more particularly, *I know* and *I think*.” (Wierzbicka 2006: 250)

As already mentioned, in the literature epistemic adverbs have habitually been examined from a syntactic point of view. However, two significant remarks have been made: first, that epistemic adverbs are ‘speaker-oriented’ rather than ‘subject-oriented’ (Lyons 1977: 746), and second, that they communicate “a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker.” (Cinque 1999: 86) As our study will reveal later in Chapter 3, epistemic adverbs express indeed a lower degree of commitment and are highly subject-oriented, as certain adverbs are generally used in relation to particular characters.

One more thing to mention here is that in the literature on English grammar, epistemic adverbs are often deemed equal to discourse markers or modal particles⁷, such as *perhaps* and *maybe*. And even though Wierzbicka (2006) believes that it is important to make a clear distinction between them, and that they have a distinct semantic structure and significant peculiarity, particles involving in their semantics both the speaker and the addressee, while the epistemic adverbs only communicate the speaker’s own position, we will treat them on a par in our investigation. Besides, we believe that both epistemic adverbs and modal markers refer to other people as well – the speaker believes/hopes that others also share the knowledge and evaluation s/he imparts.

A significant contribution to the theory of modals is that of Kratzer (1977; 1981) within formal semantics. Two main ideas of Kratzer’s approaches are the ones called ‘relative modality’, which considers modals to be quite unambiguous and whose meaning derive entirely from the conversational backgrounds chosen in a particular context; and the other is ‘ordering semantics’, which considers the two possible worlds being just part of a ranking the speaker generates through an interaction of two conversational backgrounds. Thus, modality’s central issue would be identifying the correct set of worlds that is quantified by certain modal expressions.

⁷ Discourse markers are a set of expressions that include different word classes. The same applies for modal markers, which include (at least) three word classes, namely modal adverbs, interjections and modal particles. Thus, modal particles are one of the classes included in the functional category of modal markers, which also consist of interjections and modal adverbs. (Cuenca 2013)

It follows then that the meaning of any modal is entirely dependent on its accessibility relation function. In the association between a modal and its accessibility relation, pragmatics plays a crucial role. Instead of differentiating between different modals by means of semantic rules, Kratzer relies heavily on pragmatics to do the work. Thus, pragmatic information provides the meaning through context consideration, and so context provides us with two things: indexical information, such as speaker, addressee, time and place of statement, and an availability relation function. When a modal is construed, it draws on both the availability relation function, which might be epistemic, deontic, or whatever, and the indexical information to delegate a concluding meaning to the modal.

And so the distinction between different modals relies on the accessibility relations they fit. At the same time, when multiple modals occur in a sentence, they can receive different meanings, since their contexts are different. (Portner 2009: 48-50) This kind of semantic theory of modals offered by Kratzer, using an underspecified central meaning and various sources of contextual information, appears to fit that of Traugott and Dasher (2002), that the lexical meaning of the modal might be consistent only with a circumstantial modal base. Most of the contexts call for inferences of meanings on the part of the reader: besides, the narrator might intend additional inferred interpretations which s/he expects of the reader, thus leaving the underspecified core meaning of the modals to be transcended by the contextual interpretation of its uses.

2.2 Verbs of cognitive attitude

Propositional attitude predicates, epistemic verbs, mental state predicates, cognitive verbs are just some of the names assigned to a group of verbs which are considered in the philosophical and linguistic literature to express subjectivity, epistemic modality or stance. There seems to be no consensus as to the term for this class of verbs or the items to be included in this class. However, the most “prototypical” members of this category are the verbs *know*, *think* and *believe*. (Cappelli 2007: 53) And even though there is no shared understanding of this class of verbs, most of the studies carried out have similar theoretical premises and they turn out to have quite similar conclusions too. The consideration of the semantic nature of verbs of cognitive attitude was initiated mostly in the philosophical and

formal semantic traditions of research, and a lot of research traditions and approaches are concerned with the relationship between thoughts, realities and language.

In order to define meaning, one faces the difficulty of establishing boundaries between language production, encyclopaedic knowledge and the nature of the context which impacts the creation of meaning conveyed by specific linguistic structures. A great number of semantic approaches have largely focused on what Cappelli calls ‘cognitive attitude verbs’, an interest which has been inherited from the logico-philosophical tradition of research.

The philosophical interest in ‘propositional attitude predicates’ derives mostly from the fact that these predicates provoke the failure of certain laws of Logic, create opaque contexts and violate the Law of Substitutivity. Inferences normally derivable in declarative contexts are no longer derivable when the same propositions are embedded under a propositional attitude predicate. (Cappelli 2007: 55)

Many prominent names have joined in the debate, the most decisive contributions being those of Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell. Thus, the verbs that express propositional attitudes are those that communicate “the psychological relation between an individual and the state of affairs described by a proposition.” (Ibid: 55)

Most of the linguistic studies of the verbs of cognitive attitude come from the research of epistemic modality, which is not surprising, since they do express epistemic stance and subjectivity in general. Many indeed agree that verbs like *think* and *believe* are essential means of lexicalizing the speaker’s presence in the discourse. They are also ways of clarifying the speaker’s position on what is being said. However, part of the debate about this class of verbs is the degree of the speaker’s claim of knowledge, as is the case of *know*, for instance. One striking feature of the English language is the abundance of cognitive attitude verbs, such as *think*, *guess*, *suppose*, etc. They are placed in different positions in the sentence and are usually accompanied by *I*.

In order to express our understanding, our knowledge and beliefs about the world, or the assumptions we make based on the information we have available, we need to have the necessary linguistic means to point the degree of our commitment to the actuality we encode in our statements. The category of the verbs of cognitive attitude represents a set of essential

lexical ways for us to communicate fundamental concepts available to us to describe the states of affairs. In this regard, the influence of philosophical semantics also emerges in the account of epistemic modality as the signal of the degree of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed (Palmer 1986, Lyons 1977), as the speaker's confidence or lack of thereof (Coates 1983), reliability of the information (Chafe 1986) or subjectivity (Englebretson 2007).

In spite of slightly different views and notions, all studies of verbs of cognitive attitude serve as relevant platform, as they all are centred on different levels and aspects of this class of verbs. As mentioned earlier in the paper, the semantics of these verbs deals with the notions of possibility, probability, as well as certainty and commitment. So, while the first two denote the status of the state of affairs, the latter deal with the attitude of the assessor. Biber et al. (1999) differentiate between parenthetical and adverbial use. Verbs like *think*, *know* and *guess* are considered frequently markers of epistemic stance employed by the speaker to make comments on the status of the information that they qualify.

Cappelli (2007) includes in her investigation a list of verbs that lexicalize different patterns of epistemic and evidential information, and which are used to indicate the speaker's evaluation of the existential situation of a state of affairs with changeable degrees of commitment. The first phase of her selection included dictionary and thesaurus entries of verbs synonymous with mostly investigated verbs *think* and *believe*. She used Collins Cobuild Dictionary, the Oxford English Dictionary, the Meriam-Webster dictionary, the Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language and Wordnet. These searches provided her with a list of 44 verbs: *accept, admit, allow, appear, assert, assume, believe, bet, conceive, conjecture, consider, deem, disbelieve, distrust, doubt, esteem, expect, fancy, feel, figure, find, gather, grant, guess, imagine, judge, know, maintain, presume, question, realize, reckon, recognize, see, seem, sense, suppose, surmise, suspect, swallow, think, trust, understand* and *wonder*.

A second stage in her investigation was a list of verbs drawn up after a test given to a group of 50 native speakers of British and American English where they were asked to offer synonyms for *think*, *believe*, *imagine*, *guess*, *know*, *suppose* and *assume*. The resulting list did not supplement much the list created out of the dictionary and thesaurus entries, except some

noteworthy paraphrastic expressions like ‘to be aware of’, ‘to have proof that’ as synonyms of *know*, ‘be convinced’ as synonym of *believe*, together with some lexical verbs not part of the list such as *confide*, *hope*, *conclude* and *hold*. The paraphrastic expressions were excluded straightaway. She then sorted these heterogeneous lists according to a model developed within the logico-semantic tradition of research, which even though not so close to her approach, proved useful in sorting these lists. And so, as a result, she was left with a list of 25 verbs: *assume*, *believe*, *bet* (mostly AmE), *conjecture*, *consider*, *doubt*, *expect*, *fancy*, *feel*, *figure*, *gather*, *guess*, *imagine*, *judge*, *know*, *presume*, *reckon*, *see* (*I can’t see that...* - mostly BrE), *sense*, *suppose*, *surmise*, *suspect*, *think*, *trust*, *wonder* (*I shouldn’t wonder* – mostly BrE).

However, it is clear that the borderlines of these lists are quite fuzzy, with some verbs such as *think* and *believe* constituting the more archetypical ones, and with more marginal ones, such as *wonder*, *see*, *conjecture*, etc. The hypothesis of her study was to create ‘a semantic map’ of the epistemic-evidential information in English and its lexicalization, featuring both ‘central verbs’, and also other verbs that encipher interrelated meanings, and which depart increasingly from their underlying meanings. (Cappelli 2007: 107) It follows then that the semantic meanings of these verbs are conditioned by their empiric⁸ potential in different textual and contextual circumstances. They can become part of different categories and form alternative boundaries, as any categorizations are more or less merely theoretic constructs adjustable to the purpose of sociolinguistic analyses of particular situations.

These verbs of cognitive attitude are also investigated in connection with a problem field of research that we touched upon earlier⁹, namely subjectivity, as it is considered by some to pertain to epistemicity, evidentiality or as a more independent extensive notion. Traugott (1999) suggests that semantic change leads toward a cumulative subjectivity, “which means that diachronically meaning tends to be more and more based on the speaker’s attitude.” (Cappelli 2007: 84) This also turns out to be a useful explanation for when these verbs tend to

⁸ By empiric we mean the practical semantic function these verbs can have in different contextual situations in the text. As we will see later in Chapter 3, sometimes these verbs can have a slightly different reading than the traditional one; this is due to our very broad view of epistemicity on the one hand, and also due to a lack of a rigid categorization of this set of verbs on the other hand.

⁹ pp. 16-19

denote more and more abstract notions, as even synchronically many of these verbs tend to follow the path of increasing subjectivity.

An interesting view of verbs of cognitive attitude is the one proposed by Wierzbicka (2006). As a universalist, functionalist and cognitivist, she believes that all semantic systems are produced in a cultural framework, so every language arranges intricate meanings differently, lexicalizing semantic primes in distinctive patterns and in distinctive words. She considers the language as a means of conveying meaning, and not an isolated unit independent from all other cognitive activities.

A natural language is a powerful system in which very complex and diverse meanings can be formulated and conveyed to other people. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory of language assumes that the intelligibility of all such meanings depends on the existence of a basic set of conceptual primes that are intuitively clear (and presumably innate) and do not require any explanations and that constitute the bedrock of human communication and cognition. (Wierzbicka 2006: 17)

Wierzbicka believes that all languages of the world share semantic primitives¹⁰, as fundamental human concepts are innate. She lists among these primitives *think* and *know*; they are simple notions which cannot be further described and which fall in the category of mental predicates together with *want*, *feel*, *see* and *hear*. In her model, *think* corresponds to the Cartesian “cogito” and together with *know*, is deemed to be essential in the descriptions of semantic issues such as evidentiality. “Clearly, *know* as well as *think* is also the basis of “evidentials” (*I know because I see*, *I know because I hear*, *I think, I do not say: I know*, and so on). (Wierzbicka 1996: 49)

What Cappelli (2007) calls ‘verbs of cognitive attitude’, a term we also borrow for this study, are labelled by Wierzbicka (2006) as ‘epistemic verbal phrases’. Wierzbicka also believes that English boasts an abundance of such verb phrases, which is “without parallel in other languages of the world.” (Wierzbicka 2006: 247) She lists the following epistemic verb phrases: *I expect, I believe, I suppose, I assume, I imagine, I gather, I presume, I guess, I*

¹⁰ Wierzbicka’s idea about semantic primitives is based on the assumption that essential human concepts are part of the human genetic endowment, and that since they are innate, there is no reason to expect that they should be different from one human group to another. This would make any interpretation of human experience somehow relatable from one person to another, since we all share some basic concepts to materialize the communication of our world experiences. (1996: 15)

suspect, I take it, I understand, I trust, I wonder, I feel. Moreover, these expressions can be further extended in countless ways, such as, *I should think, I should've thought, I'm inclined to think, I tend to think, I don't think, I don't suppose, I would guess, my guess is, my understanding is, I would argue, and I would suggest.*

Most of the works that deal with the problem of verbs of cognitive attitude focus on their pragmatics and their functions in the discourse. Whenever speakers make statements they tend to attach their attitude to their propositions. Epistemic modality has become a regular way of expressing the speaker's standpoint and evaluation of his/her contextual background, which consequently reveals the social elements of the speech; therefore, verbs of cognitive attitude can have some other functions in the discourse. Most of the time these lexical items have as objective to perform a certain function in the communication process, and also to call for a certain reaction and engagement on the part of the addressee. And so, we get a full interaction between the interlocutors and the conversational background that provide us with epistemic meanings conveyed by such verbs. Moreover, one shared claim among researchers of verbs of cognitive attitude is that they can be used as hedging devices¹¹ or markers of involvement. Thus, this class of verbs constitute devices the speaker has handy in order to manage and mitigate his/her utterances and influence the extent to which the utterances can have an impact on the addressees.

Of special interest is the study of Kärkkäinen (2003), which offers a great analysis of the functions of *I think* and *I guess* in spoken American English. She is of the opinion that these verbs do not have a precise semantic meaning, and that they acquire their meanings “depending on the sequential environment and the larger social context.” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 26) However, she points out that these items do need to have some sort of fixed semantic meanings which would determine the speaker's choice among them, but that these meanings are of an ambiguous nature, only made clear by their contextual background.

Kärkkäinen (2003) notes that epistemic stance is commonly expressed initially; that markers of epistemic stance, among which she incorporates the most recurrent verbs of cognitive

¹¹ A hedge is any deliberately ambiguous or equivocal statement, called often understater or downtoner, which is described by Hyland as “either a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition, or a desire not to express that commitment categorically.” (Hyland 1998: 1)

attitude in spoken American English (i.e. *I think/I do not think, I guess, I know/I do not know, I can't believe, I imagine*) and some which are less common (*I bet, I assume*) have both subjective and intersubjective functions; she also distinguishes between *I think* and *I guess*, the two verbs that her research is based on: *I think* is described as epistemic and *I guess* is regarded as evidential. Kärkkäinen (2003) believes that stance taking is a vastly customary linguistic form and that speakers tend to make use of the same linguistic devices in making evaluative propositions about the states of affairs.

Furthermore, many studies, concerned with the sociocultural dimension of verbs of cognitive attitude, among which is the one by Englebretson (2007), uncover the way socio-cultural knowledge is reflected in the use of verbs of cognitive attitude; they also reflect professional and stereotypical experience. By making use of this class of verbs, speakers are able to index the cognitive peculiarities of their social and cultural identities. Another study relevant for our study, which focuses on the interactional nature of the verbs of cognitive attitude, is the one carried out by Verhagen (2005). He believes that linguistic expressions are signals intended for us to make inferences, which ultimately lead to cognitive changes. All cognitive stances are oriented toward coordinating stances between speaker/writer and the addressees toward some object of conceptual framing, “the default condition for ordinary expressions is that they provide an argument for some conclusion, and this argumentative orientation is what is constant in the function of the expression, while its information value is more variable.” (Verhagen 2005: 10)

White (2003) explores the category of epistemic verbs as an essentially dialogic activity¹² and looks into its textual properties, which he believes “provide the means for speakers/writers to take a stance towards the various points-of-view or social positionings being referenced by the text and thereby to position themselves with respect to the other social subjects who hold those positions.” (White 2003: 259) So, verbs of cognitive attitude have the function of textual reference to different voices and their roles in the interaction; they also point to

¹² By ‘dialogic activity’ White means that by the use of wordings such as *perhaps, It has been argued that..., naturally..., admittedly, I think...*, the textual voice acts essentially to acknowledge, to engage with or to associate itself with respect to positions which are in some way alternatives to that being put forward by the text. In this, he relies on the view of verbal communication proposed by Bakhtin/Vološinov. For Bakhtin/Vološinov, all verbal communication, be it written or spoken, “is ‘dialogic’ in that to speak or write is always to refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners.” (White 2003:260-261)

various standpoints presented and actuated by the text. Thus, verbs of cognitive attitude contribute to interpreting social roles and affiliations, which have the potential “rhetorically to influence beliefs, attitudes, expectations and modes of interrelating.” (Ibid: 259)

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning some of the research done in the field of what is called ‘stancetaking’. Englebretson (2007), on the basis of qualitative analysis of tokens in corpora, establishes five conceptual principles defining stance: (1) stancetaking occurs on three levels as physical action, personal attitude/belief/evaluation and social morality; (2) stance is public and perceivable, interpretable and available for inspection by others; (3) stance is interactional and it is collaboratively constructed among participants with respect to other stances; (4) stance is indexical, evoking aspects of the broader sociocultural frameworks or physical contexts; and (5) stance is consequential, leading to real consequences for the persons or institutions involved.¹³ (Englebretson 2007:6)

Another interesting study is the one carried out by Du Bois (2007), who constructs an analytic set of tools for researching stance, ‘the stance triangle’, as he labels it, which postulates that stance is to be seen as three acts in one. For Du Bois, evaluation, positioning and alignment represent different aspects of the same stance act¹⁴, so that taking a stance means that the stancetaker (1) evaluates an object, (2) positions a subject (usually the self), and (3) aligns with other subjects¹⁵. Du Bois suggests the following description of stance: stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through explicit communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any relevant aspect of the sociocultural field. (Du Bois 2007: 163)

¹³ Englebretson clarifies with three examples, one illustrating physical stance, another personal and the third one moral stance. One of the examples is a conversation taking place at a family get-together, where Gail, a college student, is describing an interview she attended at a private Catholic college. Gail: - *You know what, they asked me some really weird questions though.* Gail: - *They asked me ... what my stance was on abortion.* Patty: - *That’s a controversial question.* Englebretson suggests that stance refers here to the speaker’s beliefs about, attitudes toward, and evaluation of a *controversial* moral issue. (Englebretson 2007: 8-9)

¹⁴ Most of the cases Du Bois investigates involve one of three clearly differentiated kinds of stance function, namely evaluation (*that’s horrible*), positioning (*I’m glad*), and alignment (*I agree*). (Du Bois 2007: 144)

¹⁵ Alignment is defined by Du Bois as the act of calibrating the relationship between two stances. Most commonly, speakers show alignment by stance markers like *yes* or *no*, or any other forms that index some degree of alignment. As a rule, participants let their alignment be implicit, inviting the listener to infer it based on comparing relevant stances. Implicit stance alignment is especially significant in the management of intersubjectivity (Du Bois 2007: 144), something we take into account when dealing with stance in our text.

The conclusions drawn by Du Bois, which complement others mentioned earlier, are that we can understand the nature of stance within a sociocognitive framework, where objective, subjective and intersubjective relations are established in the process of a dialogic interaction; these relations are established through attitudinal acts intended to assess objects (objective), to place subjects (subjective), and to align with other subjects (intersubjective). “The stance triangle can clarify the array of entities and sociocognitive relations that are activated, constituted, and brought into relation to each other by a particular stance action.” (Ibid: 170)

One distinctive feature of the human mind is its ability to have contemplative thoughts and beliefs about the world, which constitutes the most important category of cognition. This existential relation between the human mind and the world is revealed in what we define epistemicity and evidentiality. In order for us to be able to effectively process information we need to storage it by consigning some sort of epistemic status. These cognitive attitudes then become lexicalized as mental representations of the status of different states of affairs. Verbs of cognitive attitude embody thus the means by which the human mind expresses its cognitive activity. Attitudes can be dynamic and, as we mentioned earlier, highly interactive; they are also amenable in accordance with different parts of the text and subject to broad interpretation. Whenever we examine a text, we are bound to come across a continuous shift of attitudes throughout its development, and if we want to follow the dynamics of the text and get a good understanding of it, we need to be aware of that.

It seems clear that regardless of the difference in the theoretical frameworks, all these investigations are different ways of looking at the same phenomenon. This category of verbs, called stance by some, cognitive by others, represent a class of verbs hard to define, but whose meanings are considered to be semantic primitives, even though there is no consensus on what primitive meaning entails either. What everybody agrees on, though, is that they express epistemic evaluation, evidentiality and commitment, and that they are also references to common conceptual dimensions and encode the empirical connection between the human mind and the world.

2.3 Epistemic modality as a tool in the study of prose

The study of literature as language has been disputed in the past thirty years, with no consensus on the validity of literary analysis through linguistic exploration. However, there is a shared belief among linguists that such an activity is fully justified. Among the misconceptions about studying literature as language is the automatic feature of a linguistic analysis, that by applying linguistic categories to the analysis of the text, one takes away the human involvement. Such an approach considers this to be a mechanical process and that a linguistic analysis of a text is based exclusively on the linguistic devices available to the linguist in advance. However, such a view exposes a rather rigid and inflexible perspective of a linguistic investigation, devoid of all human dimensions, because “for linguistics, literature *is* language, to be theorized just like any other discourse; it makes no sense to degrade the language to a mere medium, since the meanings, themes, larger structures of a text, ‘literary’ or not, are uniquely constructed by the text in its interrelation with social and other contexts.” (Fowler 1996: 196)

It is our goal in this study to demonstrate that a novel is a multitudinous structure of meanings and values constructed in a social and cultural environment that represent a complex and distinctive world; that the linguistic expressions in the language of *American Pastoral* reflect extensively the interaction between its creator and its users within significant social and historical contexts. It is in the pragmatic dimension of a linguistic approach to literature that the communicative property comes out. In order to achieve the goal of this study, we get the help of functionalist stylistics, which considers of significance the functional meaning of any linguistic interpretation of text. Therefore, “a formal feature is only considered stylistically significant if it is functional, if it has a particular meaning or effect or value.” (Weber 1996: 2)

Traditionally, the study of literature has been regarded as a branch of aesthetics, with texts constituting artistic wholes with artistic value that are accessible and interpreted through artistic awareness and intuition. This is where stylistics makes its contribution and concerns itself with the patterning of language, making no assumption as to the artistic value.

By investigating the way language is used in a text, it can make apparent those linguistic patterns upon which an intuitive awareness of artistic values ultimately depend. (Widdowson 1996: 140)

The present investigation of expressions of epistemic necessity, possibility and probability are looked upon as ways of communicating fundamental social and cultural aspects of American society, because as Kratzer (1981) postulates, the multitude of modal meanings rely greatly on the background context, a postulation we also adopt in our research.

The meaning of a particular modal expression can only be fully comprehended within the context of its use. Furthermore, an important element of linguistic inquiry into literature is the system of shared knowledge within a particular society and between its speakers, which makes it relevant to investigate the values considered necessary by the novel's characters as evocative of American society. Functional grammar argues that linguistic structures are chosen in accordance with the communicative purposes they perform.

It can be assumed that the total linguistic resources available to a speaker have been cumulatively formed by the communicative practices of the society into which s/he is born, and then by the practices in which s/he participates during socialization... So the linguistic critic, like the ordinary reader or hearer, cannot just recognize the linguistic structure and, consulting his pragmatic competence, assign a significance to it. A more realistic view of linguistic interaction is that we process text as discourse, that is, as a unified whole of text and context – rather than as structure with function attached. (Fowler 1996: 203)

It is, therefore, imperative to bear in mind the orientation towards contextualization in the linguistic analysis of discourse. It follows then that the analysis of literature as language does not dissect the text structurally, but takes into account the knowledge of its context, the relationship between linguistic structures and their functions in the literary discourse.

However, the problem of such analysis poses several questions: can we as readers or linguistic researchers be able to separate the writer's language from our own? Can we look into a text and not bring our own language into its examination? We have also mentioned the social and cultural realities presented to us in the novel, but the question is, can we recognize those realities as different from the ones known to us? All these questions we believe have one answer: any discourse analysis implies that we as readers relate a text to our own experiences and knowledge and we construct the text under investigation with our own

language and reality, therefore, applying our own knowledge and experience to its understanding. Because, as it turns out, text interpretation cannot occur in a non-committed and neutral way, as linguistic structures reflect social and political realities that communicate meanings created out of those realities. And so in order to decipher and interpret those meanings we need to have knowledge and premises for evaluation of those particular realities.

According to Labov's (1972b) classic model of narration, the recounting of a coherent and exciting narrative entails an unambiguous indication of the significance of the story – why the story deserves to be told in the first place. In the Labovian framework, this is indicated chiefly through the use of evaluation. In personal stories, evaluation reveals the reasons why the narrator decides to tell the story in the first place. In non-personal stories, it serves as elucidation of the motivations of the characters of the story to do the things that they do within the story. Evaluation, which lies at the core of epistemicity, represents then the linguistic means by which a narrative integrates different levels of assessment, thus uncovering narrative perspectives offered by the characters of the story, which are typically situated within a particular time and space frame, thus placing the story within a social and historical context. Moreover, with each change in narrative perspective occurs a change in epistemological stance as well.

By looking into the epistemological assessment present in the language of the narrative we are able to determine the extent to which the consciousness of the characters is represented in their thoughts and actions, and also their perspectives on the happenings of the story. At the same time, in order to understand the perspectives offered by characters in the story, the reader should be able to understand why the characters think and act the way they do; the reader needs to know the universe of the story world. As *American Pastoral* is situated in the late-sixties America, we need to take into consideration the particularities of that period of time and make connections to what is obviously the basis for evaluation and stance interpretation in the novel.

Ultimately, there is an evident aspect of the use of expressions of epistemic modality that is concerned with the representational process of the mind. In their epistemic uses, modals such

as *may*, *must* and *should* express a coherent relation between a certain statement and the speaker's belief-set.

From the speaker's point of view, the employment of epistemic modality rests crucially on the ability to reflect on the content of one's own beliefs, to take into account the reliability of those beliefs, and to perform deductive operations on them. (Papafragou 2000: 70)

This entails that the speaker is aware of his/her representations of his/her own perceptions of reality, which are not necessarily objective reflections; the epistemically modalised utterances are meant to represent references to the mental representation and evaluation of the speaker, who communicates propositions based on the information and evidence s/he has available. This is ultimately meant to help us when interpreting epistemic modality in the text, as we will examine the extent to which epistemic modal expressions assert the speaker's belief-set, and further look at the conclusions reached on the basis of internally represented evidence.

2.4 The cognitive-pragmatic approach to discourse analysis

Language lies at the core of investigating the world, as it is one of the most significant channels by which the human mind reveals itself.

Humans live and communicate within a certain cognitive environment: a set of facts and assumptions which are manifest to them. Facts and assumptions are manifest to individuals to the extent that the individuals can mentally represent them and accept them as true with a high degree of confidence. On this picture, human communication is for the most part an attempt to make a set of facts or assumptions manifest, or more manifest, to an audience; what communicators aim to do is to affect others' thoughts in partly predictable ways by affecting their cognitive environment. (Papafragou 2000: 16)

This aspect of affecting others' thoughts and ideas about the world originates in a shared environment which allows us to acquire the same cognitive perceptions and behaviour, formative of a collective attitude towards the world, which explains the predictable nature of the communicators' assumptions about their settings.

All fiction is created out of such environments, reflecting the knowledge and cognitive processes taking place in it. The term 'cognitive' refers to the language as being an aspect of

the human mental activity. It represents a sophisticated cognitive framework pertaining to the brain and allowing its production and elucidation. Therefore, any kind of linguistic analysis entails an investigation of the human mind as well. As far as its pragmatic property goes, it refers to the function played by the language in the context of the human behaviour¹⁶; it facilitates communication with other members of the species, and even if language is not the only means of communication, it is one of the most sophisticated ones when it comes to the complexity of the information units it can convey. One of the most significant cognitive-pragmatic analyses of epistemic modality has been carried out by Nuyts (2000), which makes it one of very few research frameworks of this kind, as most of the investigations focus on only one of these two dimensions of the language.

The cognitive and the pragmatic or functional dimensions of language are not just two separate issues, however. They are two faces of one phenomenon, which must be mutually interrelated and interdependent. The cognitive-pragmatic perspective takes this observation to heart: it assumes that an adequate account of language in general, or of any linguistic phenomenon in particular, has to do full justice to both dimensions simultaneously, in an integrative way. That is, understanding language means 'unearthing' that cognitive infrastructure responsible for producing and perceiving linguistic acts of communication. (Nuyts 2000: 3)

In the late seventies linguistic pragmatics got separated into social pragmatics and cognitive pragmatics. The socially oriented pragmatics, applicable to our study, is concerned with the way in which social and political ideologies are created and developed in texts. The term ideology in this context has a more neutral meaning designating "common-sensical assumptions and values which are shared by a particular social group and which make up the world-view of that group." (Weber 1996: 4) It follows then that such analyses are essentially founded on a linguistics that is clearly constructivist in its primary assumptions. Illustrative is Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, which regards language as a resource for creating meaning, a meaning potential in and through which social experience is constructed and produced, a social semiotic that constitutes the reality of the respective culture.

¹⁶ The meaning of the term 'pragmatics' we use in our study refers to the functional perspective on language and not as a component of the language.

One exciting aspect of the cognitive-pragmatic approach in a study such as ours is that it allows us to observe the language as the result of the interdependence between perception and behaviour; it allows us to investigate the cognitive dimension of the language used in discourse and advances our understanding of the cognitive foundation responsible for the use of certain linguistic structures. Different theories focus on different aspects of semantics, but the fundamental question that all are concerned with is: how is it possible to talk about the world so that what we communicate can make us understand each other? On the one hand, there are the so-called “referential or denotational theories” that support the “objectivist” view of meaning, which is regarded as being “grounded in reality”. On the other hand, there are the so-called “representational or mentalist theories”, which are based on the belief that meaning is determined by the individual’s cognitive faculties, that the capacity to talk about the world depends largely on the mental shapes we give the world around us. Thus, language reflects reality in our own “conceptual structures.” (Cappelli 2007: 54)

The meaning of a linguistic expression is then revealed in the relation between that expression and the world it refers to. It is this view that helps us comprehend the meanings conveyed by a text; the contextual background is paramount when considering the linguistic investigation of our novel.¹⁷

Therefore, understanding meaning amounts to being able to match linguistic symbols to the situations that they describe. (Cappelli 2007: 76)

World knowledge is a very broad concept, which comprises not only information about things and events in the physical world, but also structures and conventions present in the social world, together with the individual’s own and others’ mental representations of those worlds, manifested in attitudes, emotions, etc. that are based on their perceptions and interpretations of reality, but also based on their own imagination. These perceptions and interpretations represent Philip Roth’s perspective on a historical period in American life which was eventful and which provides a myriad of diverse perspectives, estimations and accounts.

¹⁷ Smith places great emphasis on background assumptions including both rules of linguistic practice and all kinds of beliefs and knowledge; this background is a context of beliefs held by the subject, together with his cultural environment. (Smith 2000:201)

At the core of the cognitive-pragmatic approach lies what Nuyts (2000) calls ‘human conceptualisation’, which includes

mechanisms for achieving world knowledge, reasoning mechanisms which relate and combine chunks of knowledge to make logical inferences, deductions, etc., and different kinds of mechanisms which prepare conceptual knowledge for use in (linguistic or other) action, or which select and prepare information derived from perception for integration in the store of conceptual knowledge. (Nuyts 2000: 6)

However, a dynamic preoccupation with the cognitive dimension of discourse, beyond the linguistic one, is not common practice among traditional functional linguists.

Traditionally the focus has been limited to purely linguistic concepts based on enclosed grammar models, which discount anything else exceeding the strictly linguistic dimension, even though functionalists are in agreement that there is no autonomous concept of the language faculty. In spite of the fact that in Functional Grammar, for example, the essential constituent is the lexicon, which offers the components for the basic representations, it does not really offer any model of how it can be related to conceptualization. Other functionalist models, such as Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin 1993b) or Systemic-functional Grammar (Halliday 1994) do tend to look beyond language and examine what it does for the activities of the human mind, but it is only applied in methodology, as a guide to watch how the linguistic structures can be related to what happens in the world. Undoubtedly, due to a lack of the cognitive viewpoint, the way these structures work in the larger context and how humans cognitively deal with the world is not applied in theory. This is indeed due to the lack of clear cognitive research.

Humans interact with their environment through many other ways than language; language is in fact “a superimposed type of behaviour, since it taps the basic possibilities of one or more sense organs and motor systems and conventionalizes certain patterns based on them as codes to convey specific (types of) meanings.” (Nuyts 2000: 11) And yet, conceptualization is that aspect of the human perception and behaviour that uncovers the way humans make sense of the world. Therefore, the underlying feature of the conceptual system is the way human behaviour, the organisation and assimilation of the human knowledge and their manifestations in attitudinal actions relate to each other.

Since language operates as an arbitrator in the activity of communicating conceptual contents, it is evident that the linguistic system must be considered as a usage system. Besides, it must be exceptionally context-sensitive thus variable and accommodating, since communication entails dealing with several dimensions of the communicative situations.

Given the complex set of functional factors determining language use in communication, utterance processing must be able to take systematic recourse to several different sources of conceptual information so as to produce or understand utterances in accordance with the circumstances (this includes knowledge not only of facts in the world the utterance is about, but also of the hearer's knowledge, status, background, etc., of general social norms and rules, of the actual communicative setting, etc.) (Ibid: 11)

Language production then follows a path from conceptual to linguistic representation in a gradual way, assimilating and integrating human perception of the world, so that the integration of those perceptions and their communication takes place through linguistic expressions. And so epistemic expressions in language emerge as a result of the human conceptualization, from estimations belonging to the human perception of the world and the way this perception and action influences the human existence overall.

By looking into the complexity and variability of epistemic modality and epistemic stance in language, we engage in the exciting project of revealing how

a systematic and comprehensive functional analysis of the linguistic expressions of this semantic category, which fully acknowledges the dimensions of depth and dynamism, can improve our understanding of the behaviour of those expressions. At the same time, it holds the potential of being a rich source of information on the question how linguistic processing relates to deeper dimensions of conceptual structure and processing. And it may even provide ways to find out more about the status and functioning in human conceptualization of epistemic evaluations, and, by extrapolation, even of metarepresentational dimensions in general. (Ibid: 23)

Much of the earlier research of epistemic modality has taken the form-to-function approach, disregarding the usage properties of the forms, such as the interactional and discourse-functional dimensions. Most of the research has been done as part of the functionalist linguistics, with no radical and systemic-functional angle.

In our study we will follow Nuyts' (2000) function-to-form approach; we start out from specific functional categories, the semantic category of epistemic modality and epistemic stance in our case, and investigate the range of manifestations of this category in linguistic structures, so that we are able to get a systematic picture of how the connection between function and form works in discourse.

2.5 Appraisal – additional framework to investigate emotional stance

Our study would be incomplete without investigating one exciting field within systemic-functional grammar, which is concerned with the appraisal resources in discourse. The model we adopt for our analysis is the one proposed by Martin&White (2005). SFL distinguishes three kinds of meaning which function concomitantly in all statements – the textual, the ideational and the interpersonal.

Our aim is to focus on the interpersonal mode of meaning by attending to one of the three axes studied by Martin&White, namely what they call 'affect', "by which writers/speakers positively or negatively evaluate the entities, happenings and states-of-affairs with which their texts are concerned." (Martin&White 2005: 2) We will look into the language that characters in *American Pastoral* employ in order to communicate their attitudes but also the means by which they subtly incite evaluative stances from readers to make their own assessments.

Appraisal theory has customarily been dealt with in connection with epistemic modality and evidentiality. We consider it to be of significance to make appraisal part of our study, as it does not merely attend to questions of speaker certainty, knowledge and commitment but also to issues of how various voices in discourse position themselves to each other and the viewpoints they stand for. Since the main characters in *American Pastoral*, the Swede and his daughter Merry, fervently defend two opposing belief-sets, which stand for bigger generational dogmas, appraisal is a valuable tool in a study of the linguistic means by which our characters "present themselves as recognising, answering, ignoring, challenging,

rejecting, fending off, anticipating or accommodating actual or potential interlocutors and the value positions they represent.”¹⁸ (Martin&White 2005: 2)

The interpersonal resources involve the way people interact and exchange perspectives, with a primary focus on the feelings that they share. Appraisal is one of three major discourse semantic resources construing interpersonal meaning.

Appraisal itself is regionalised as three interacting domains – ‘attitude’, ‘engagement’ and ‘graduation’. Attitude is concerned with our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things. Engagement deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. Graduation attends to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred. Attitude is itself divided into three regions of feeling, ‘affect’, ‘judgement’ and ‘appreciation’. Affect deals with resources for construing emotional reactions... (Ibid: 35)

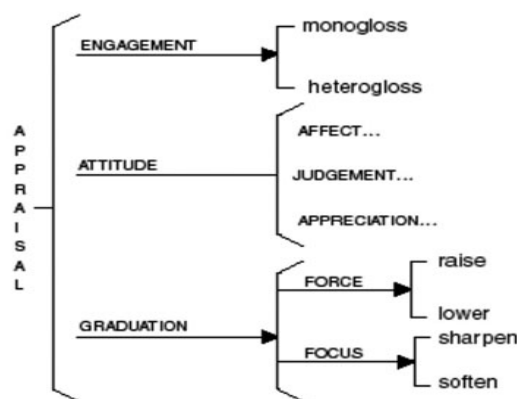


Figure 1. An overview of appraisal resources (Martin&White 2005:38)

In our study we are concerned with affect, which is a category of attitude, and which represents the framework for mapping positive and negative feelings in the novel. Affect is “one of the semantic components of attitude¹⁹ in the adult language.” (Painter 2003: 187) In

¹⁸ Martin&White also focus on what has been labeled as ‘intensification’ and ‘vague language’, delivering a framework for designating how speakers/writers increase and decrease the intensity of their statements and how they sharpen or blur the semantic categorisations which they use. (Martin&White 2005:2)

¹⁹ Martin (2000) suggests that each type of attitude involves positive or negative feeling, and that JUDGMENT and APPRECIATION might be interpreted as institutionalizations of AFFECT which have evolved to socialize individuals into various uncommon sense communities of feeling—JUDGMENT as AFFECT recontextualized to control behavior (what we should and should not do), APPRECIATION as AFFECT recontextualized to manage taste (what things are worth). (Martin 2000:174)

our exploration of the lexical items expressing affect we consider two factors²⁰: 1) positive affect and 2) negative affect.²¹ Also, the intensity of the feelings and emotions we are investigating are dictated by the roles characters have in the novel, because the more actively a speaker is involved in the situation described, the more intense feelings s/he will have about it.

The recognized grammatical realization for attitude is the adjective; however, we will not limit ourselves to adjectives only, and examine mental processes/states and nouns as additional framing. In terms of categorizing affect, Martin and his colleagues suggest three main semantic domains, each construable either as a state of being or a form of behavior. These are un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. (Martin 2000)

Values of affect offer one of the most observable ways for a speaker to assume a stance towards some experience - they convey the resources by which the speaker can designate how that experience affected them emotionally, and assess that experience in affectual terms. We have mentioned earlier some of the values that *American Pastoral* is concerned with; appraisal will help us detect characters' evaluations of and responses to those values, which very often are intersubjectively charged. Besides, by appraising events in affectual terms, the speaker/writer invites the reader to share that emotional response, or at least to see that response as justified or plausible.

²⁰ Martin& White use six factors in total in their study, beside the first two we shall use in our analysis, they also consider 3) behavioural surge, 4) mental process/state, 5) reaction to other and 6) undirected mood.

²¹ The following examples correspond to the six factors: 1) the captain was happy, 2) the captain was sad, 3) the captain wept, 4) the captain disliked leaving/the captain felt sad, 5) the captain disliked leaving/ leaving displeased the captain , 6) the captain was sad (2005: 46-47)

3. Necessities, possibilities and attitudes in *American Pastoral*

In this chapter we will study the linguistic means used by Philip Roth in *American Pastoral* and will try to identify their semantics. First, we will provide a brief outline of the notion of the American dream (section 3.1) and will take an overall look at the novel, mentioning very succinctly the issues it is concerned with (section 3.2). We will then analyse the use of epistemic modal verbs (section 3.3) and epistemic adverbs (3.4) in specific contexts we quote from the novel. In addition, we will focus on three verbs of cognitive attitude (section 3.5) and investigate two kinds of emotions that the language of the novel exhibits (section 3.6).

3.1 What is the American dream?

If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

Henry David Thoreau: 'Walden'

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the 'American dream' as "the ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved." The American dream is all individuals' ambitions to a better, richer and happier life, a life that would reflect the individual's overall potential. Over the progression of human history, peoples have used a variety of ways to identify themselves, such as language, religion, etc. Yet the United States of America pledges the remarkable possibility of a shared imagination and identity, inspired by the actuality of a New World, achieved in a Revolution that started with an unambiguously enunciated Declaration, and established in the inscription of an enduring Constitution.

According to Charles A. Reich (1971), American history is basically about shifts in consciousness. In *The Greening of America* he illustrates the way individualism and 'cohesion of village life' gave lots of jobs for the many and made way for the few to make vast fortunes in nineteenth-century America. He terms this stage in American history Consciousness I. Consciousness II is the period when the Corporate State takes over and impoverishes everyone in the Twentieth Century. Consciousness III is just emerging, it is the new generation. Reich uses the term Consciousness not as "a set of opinions, information, or values, but a total configuration that makes up an individual's perception of reality and worldview." (1971: 157) The consciousness of an individual is his/her values and philosophy of life; it is the whole style of the individual's life. When we talk about society, we also talk

about its consciousness, the social consciousness that dictates the individual one, highly influenced by its economic conditions.

Consciousness I is the conventional viewpoint of the American farmer, small entrepreneur and worker who is trying to achieve success. It represents the elating emancipation from the restraints of class importance in the old world. To the American people of 1789, their nation guaranteed a novel way of life: each individual a free person; each having the right to pursue his own happiness. It is the time when the individual potential is prevailing, when everybody gets the chance to explore their natural abilities and talents, when life is all about opportunities to demonstrate the best of one's abilities.

So at least at the beginning, the American dream wasn't a rags-to-riches type of narrow materialism. At its most exalted, it was a spiritual and democratic vision of human potential. (Ibid: 201)

It is mostly the predisposition of ascertaining yourself to be a winner that characterizes Consciousness I and it also led to a commendation of self-interest and correspondingly corruption of American life and government, "all under the theory that each man has a right to pursue his opportunities wherever he finds them, that "the game" is winning and getting rich and powerful, and that no community matters more than an individual's selfish interests." (Ibid: 219) It was, however, the most natural way of things to evolve; by looking at material success as the ultimate way to achieve happiness, competition becomes an indispensable part of this achievement and the pursuit of individual self-interest as the only means towards it.

Consciousness II is the time when individuals have no longer the freedom to decide on their own how their lives should be: they are dictated by corporations, organizations, enterprises, etc. All life activities have become artificial, media-driven and fabricated; beginning with school, people are methodically "stripped of imagination, creativity, heritage, dreams and personal uniqueness" in order to style themselves into profitable elements for an en mass, industrial society; crushing forces imprison character, emotion and spontaneity.

As people virtually become their professions, roles or occupations, they are strangers to themselves. That is a discrepancy between the realities of our society and our beliefs about them — we live in unreality. What we don't understand, we can't control. (Ibid: 219)

Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* deals largely with these two kinds of consciousness. The Swede represents what Reich calls Consciousness II, the belief that the American dream is still possible and that success is largely achieved based on ability and enterprise. Merry's character epitomizes what Reich labels Consciousness III, characterized by a feeling of "betrayal in excruciatingly personal terms. Between them and the rich possibilities of life there intervenes a piercing insecurity – not the personal insecurity their parents knew, but a cosmic insecurity", which is the basis for a vehement rejection of "the whole concept of excellence and comparative merit that is so central to Consciousness II". (Ibid: 162-167) The Swede embodies the traditional view of the American dream, the one in which

the individual should do his best to fit himself into a function that is needed by society... He may have an almost puritanical willingness to deny his own feelings. Self-sacrifice... serves to advance the individual and his family in terms of the rewards that society can offer. (Ibid: 54)

Ultimately, Roth, by communicating his own vision of major possibilities, writes a novel closely entwined with mainstream American culture and society plus its democratic idealisation, nostalgia and romanticism, with a representative of the Jewish American generation being the novel's primary voice and symbol of the ostensive accomplishment of the American dream. For him, the sixties are not meant to culminate an ideology he deems unflawed and efficacious, but rather "an interrogation of the mythic basis of the American dream." (Stanley 2005: 3)

3.2 Philip Roth's sentimental view of the American dream in *American Pastoral*

The fact remains that getting people right is not what living is all about anyway. It's getting them wrong that is living, getting them wrong and wrong and wrong and then, on careful reconsideration, getting them wrong again. That's how we know we're alive: we're wrong.

Philip Roth: 'American Pastoral'

Philip Roth's novel *American Pastoral* was published in 1997 and has as protagonist a successful Jewish American entrepreneur, Seymour Levov, called by everybody 'the Swede'.²² He epitomizes the image of a full realization of the American dream. Success represents the hallmark of the American dream; what's more, successful Americans do not define themselves only by their material achievements, but also their intellectual and artistic refinements. The Swede's life represents the definition of that success,

- 1) *...he was an absolute, unequivocal success... Very adroit businessman... He knew how to get the confidence of [these] people just by being himself... Attractive, responsible, hardworking guy. (AP: 67)*

American Pastoral begins with Roth's recurrent alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman, contemplating the life of Seymour Levov, who is a few years older than Zuckerman and who used to be the community's greatest athlete. He represented the all-American young man that every boy and girl fantasized about and wanted to follow. This notion of perfectionism is the idea around which Roth creates the three-part narrative of the Swede's descent from his perfect life. Invoking both Genesis and Milton's epic, Roth labels the novel's three parts, "Paradise Remembered", "The Fall", and "Paradise Lost", through which the Swede personifies a Jewish-American Adam who produces "his version of paradise". (AP: 86)

On account of his impeccable appearances and athletic proficiency, the Swede turns out to be the epitome of the Newark Jewish community's own hopes for assimilation. Besides, when the mythic Swede later marries a Catholic beauty queen, the novel's narrator Nathan Zuckerman is in awe at how the Swede indeed accomplished marvelously the assimilationist image of the American dream. However, the idyllic American life is challenged by his daughter Merry, who becomes one of the radical activists of the 1960s riots, bombs the local post office and kills the local doctor.

This is when the question of how he could produce "the angriest kid in America" (AP: 279) starts to haunt the Swede, making him reimagine his whole life and look for clues of what went wrong, what could have been the mistakes that he had made.

- 2) *What went wrong with Merry? What did he do to her that was so wrong?... After the bomb, he could never again take life as it came or trust*

²² p.10

that his life wasn't something very different from what he perceived. (AP: 92)

By reading *American Pastoral* we are faced with the possibility of the text as a historical novel, and that the Swede's family drama can be extended to a national drama, meant to reflect a tumultuous period in American history. And this is partly due to the second main character in the novel, Merry. She reflects Roth's attempt at making the upheavals of the late 1960s seem unserious, that the protests were organized by agitators on the fringe; the novel can be read as a conservative view and a critique of the sixties activism. The way the activists of the sixties appear in the novel seems to represent the view of the good American citizens like the Swede, who regard the desire to uproot a system which works perfectly well, and which is only contributing to the wellbeing of the individual, as unreasonable or simply incomprehensible.

Hence, the Swede is the representative for a whole generation of Americans who felt they had the potential and talents to thrive in a social, political and cultural environment that encouraged striving for success with all the abilities you have got. Cultural assimilation is an essential issue taken up in the novel. Swede Levov situates himself within the American pastoral by being an American rather than a Jew living in America.

- 3) *He carried it with him like an invisible passport, all the while wandering deeper and deeper into an American's life, forthrightly evolving into a large, smooth, optimistic American such as his conspicuously raw forebears—including the obstinate father whose American claim was not inconsiderable—couldn't have dreamed of as one of their own. (AP: 207)*

A sense of disappointment and sadness perspires throughout the novel of how regrettable it is that all the Swede's striving and hard work to achieve a life based on values of merit, discipline and conformity has come to be discarded by his rebellious daughter as completely worthless.

- 4) *The preparations, the practice, the obedience; the uncompromising dedication to the essential, to the things that matter most; the systematic system building, the patient scrutiny of every problem, large or small; no drifting, no laxity, no laziness; faithfully meeting every obligation, addressing energetically every situation's demands . . . a list as long as the U.S. Constitution, his articles of faith—and all of it futility. (AP: 256)*

But it is probably this very nostalgic tone that makes us feel appreciation for the American

idealism the Swede represents and we tend to believe that it still has a chance of survival and perpetuation.

So, Zuckerman's characterization of these radicals, "the bodies of the misunderstood" (AP: 42), is intended as an assessment and generalization of Merry's position as representative of all her radical fellows. Many of them possessed some sort of bodily defect, which stirred a passionate radical stance to life, and political radicalism was a way of venting all those dissatisfactions.

The ascendance of the new culture in the sixties generated a set of values that fused the avant garde with mainstream popular culture in the misnamed "counterculture."...When people decried "the system" they were not thinking in conspirational terms but rather about a world that seemed to have contempt for human needs and was indifferent to human action. The universities had become huge animals whose appearance masked rigid rules that thwarted creativity...the political and economic critiques of the rational society were the most important intellectual products of the sixties. (Steigerwald 1995: 164)

[These] younger Americans were more educated than their parents and more apt to have careers requiring professional accreditation...These were the people who had the spare time, the financial wherewithal, and the self-confidence to challenge conventional wisdom and take on established authorities... They embraced new causes, or old causes that had gone out of fashion, like environmentalism and women's rights...they so often came to a new cause by having read some seminal book on the topic. (Isserman&Kazin 2000: 56)

By having the means and liberty to pursue any interest she might have, "blessed with golden hair and a logical mind and a high IQ... blessed with a wealthy family...security, health, love, every advantage imaginable," (AP: 95) Merry stands out as a frivolous activist; her crusading appears as a whim, a distraction from the tedium of boundless possibilities which can appear too elusive and unsatisfactory for a sharp mind like hers at such an early age.

The sixties activists believed that denying authority of form and reason would liberate the senses and provide the broadest possible access to experience. They wanted political and economic emancipation. However, throughout the novel their campaign against American democracy and idealism is perceived as an unsubstantiated crusade, "largely incoherent reverberations of the sixties' voices of grievance", as Sigrist-Sutton puts it (2010: 53), which

denoted a quest of those young activists to challenge a political ideology that did not satisfy their needs for change and fulfillment.

- 5) *They have parents they can't hate anymore because their parents are so good to them, so they hate America instead.*"(AP: 255)

By having freedom to pursue their goals, and failing to do so, they found a common enemy in a system which seemed too rigid and unbending to them. The weakness of the sixties radicalism is powerfully present every time the Swede tries to understand how his daughter could so vehemently derogue a system she barely understands and the way she so blindly disrespects all the hard work that has been put into the comfort of her present life.

- 6) *How could she "hate" this country when she had no conception of this country? How could a child of his be so blind as to revile the "rotten system" that had given her own family every opportunity to succeed? To revile her "capitalist" parents as though their wealth were the product of anything other than the unstinting industry of three generations.* (AP: 213)

The inconsistency between Merry's age and an appropriate understanding of a long-standing American democracy is yet another pointer to the irrationality of her critical rage.

In *American Pastoral* Roth portrays the members of the greatest generation of Americans who personified the American dream being perplexed by the attempts of the sixties radicals to demythologize their beliefs. Roth details his own idea of major opportunities of the American democratic idealism and romanticism, but he also asks himself to what extent the sixties had reasons to deny their rationality. He scrutinizes why his vision of democratic idealism and romanticism goes awry, but also the American naiveté and innocence which is part of the American idealism. This becomes even more prominent in contrast to the aggressiveness and violence of his daughter, whom he never understands and who is a fanatical opponent of all his sacred ideals.

While the Swede desires to build his pastoral within the confines of a US consensus ideology that celebrates the American dream – epitomized by the individual embracing a Puritan work ethic and climbing the ladder of capitalistic success – his daughter's strategy of pastoral disengagement aims to destroy that consensus ideology, ejecting her father out of his pastoral Eden ... (Stanley 2005: 3-6)

Roth tries to comprehend the myth of nationhood through a rightful archetypal American,

- 7) *History, American history, the stuff you read about in books and study in school, had made its way out to tranquil, untrafficked Old Rimrock, New Jersey²³, to countryside where it had not put in an appearance that was notable since Washington's army twice wintered in the highlands adjacent to Morristown. (AP: 87)*

The Swede personifies a dream of many, an embodiment of the possibility of attaining it, the American dream, of how real and possible it can be achieved.

Zuckerman imagines post-World War II American identity as grounded in a coherent, autonomous self; and he believes that achieving such an ideal American identity demands the eradication of a Jewish past – or any ethnic past – that suggests difference. The Swede embraces the symbols of American universalism without fully realizing that he is in fact embracing not a universal but a particular form of gentile identity. (Stanley 2005: 7)

But it is this form of identity that is central to the American identity and the fulfillment of the American dream. He stirs so much admiration among his fellows especially because he was living the appealing all-American dream, a man who broke loose from his past and got rid of all its constraints.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber proclaims that one way the American capitalistic success comes to its completion is with the procurement of an ideal home. This is true about the Swede too; he considers his house in Old Rimrock to exemplify the ideal home. Because as Thomas Jefferson's views of self-reliance show, one of the essential concepts of the American life is the possession of property.

- 8) *Next to marrying Dawn Dwyer, buying that house and the hundred acres and moving out to Old Rimrock was the most daring thing he had ever done. What was Mars to his father was America to him—he was settling Revolutionary New Jersey as if for the first time. Out in Old Rimrock, all of America lay at their door. That was an idea he loved. (AP: 310)*

In building the ideal home, the Swede considers that he has reproduced the essences of America: his family symbolizes the reproduction of an ideology he deems perfect and virtuous. As an avid believer in American ideals, he supports the principles of American liberalism based on collective recognition.

²³ Where the Swede's beautiful and peaceful house was situated as embodiment of how a fulfilled American's house and life should look like.

- 9) *Nobody dominates anybody anymore. That's what the war was about. Our parents are not attuned to the possibilities, to the realities of the postwar world, where people can live in harmony, all sorts of people side by side no matter what their origins. This is a new generation and there is no need for that resentment stuff from anybody, them or us. And the upper class is nothing to be frightened of either. You know what you're going to find once you know them? That they are just other people who want to get along. (AP: 311)*

However, he unpleasantly discovers that history does not represent the victorious stride of liberalism and reason, but that history can misstep and even plunge into nonsensicality. Which again reveals the innocence and illusory perception he has of history and the factors that are at play, as history is a complex interplay of economic, political, and social factors, which turn out to be confusing and irrational at times. Nonetheless, he is keen on finding answers and figuring out whose responsibility the bombing is, he wants to understand 'the lesson' his daughter tried to teach them.

- 10) *What is the grudge? What is the grievance? That was the central mystery: how did Merry get to be who she is? (AP: 138)*

It is the bombing that makes the Swede reimagine his whole life and try to look for answers.

Interrogating private and public events, the Swede is desperately searching for a cause-and-effect narrative that will explain Merry's actions as originating in some psychological or social trauma. (Stanley 2005: 11)

The Swede's loyalty to American values and idealism do not let him grasp his daughter's discontent with the possibilities it offers. His own perception of the pastoral life imbued with liberal ideals cannot access Merry's counterpastoral rebellion and dissatisfaction.

In such as vision, capitalism and liberalism, self-interest and tolerance, the sanctity of individual rights and private property and a representative government to protect civic rights, can work hand in hand as a vehicle for social mobility and civic equality...The Swede embraces his liberal ideology without recognizing that it does not necessarily provide liberty and justice for all... (Stanley 2005: 14- 5)

By making Merry obstinately decline any appropriateness by the politic system, Roth is perhaps making a point about the real historical culmination the activism of the sixties should have had; all radicals should have fallen back on the practical implications of their dogma. The fact that the historical reality turned out to be very different from the values they

promoted and the vehemence with which they rejected the older generation's values they later embraced, leaves us with the ultimate conclusion that the 1968 activism was a fad, that Merry is the reflection of a generation of youngsters infatuated with big ideas that had no real validity.

In the search of what lies beyond what the novel offers, "Roth makes *American Pastoral* a formidably serious novel." (Sigrist-Sutton 2010: 53) It entices us to conclude that *American Pastoral*, instead of shattering the idea of the American dream, actually manages to perpetuate the myth of pastoral innocence. It convinces us that American idealism has a much stronger foundation than to be crushed by the political craze which marked the late-sixties in America. Moreover, the novel explores the idea that capitalism and liberalism, self-regard and acceptance, individual rights and private property can all work together and contribute to the individual and collective wellbeing.

Finally, the novel is meant to be a dialogue about the past, a negotiation of interpretations, but also a critique of the precarious dogma the revolt of the sixties was based on; it is also an invitation to ponder over the (lack of) intelligence of the sixties radicals and their (superficial) understanding of the realities they lived in. And the most adequate version we get of the truth of those realities is the life of the Swede, "Swede Levov's life [...] had been most simple and most ordinary and therefore just great, right in the American grain." (AP: 31)

This general overview of the messages of the novel has the purpose of making us familiar with the contextual backdrop of the novel, the historical and social themes the novel deals with, and the roles that the main characters in the novel have. It is meant to facilitate our understanding of the linguistic means that the narrator uses in order to communicate characters' beliefs through particular epistemic expressions. As we could already assume by now, the Swede and Merry stand for two different categories of beliefs, which they try hard to justify and present as the ultimate truth to be shared by other members of the community. We should then expect quite a lot of opposing beliefs communicated with higher or lower degrees of commitment, depending on the context and the availability of the evidence or knowledge they found their propositions on.

3.3 Epistemic necessities and possibilities in *American Pastoral*: modal verbs

Apart from a few exceptions it has been felt that, with the expenditure of sufficient effort, our knowledge of the world could be made more precise. But more recently there has been a growing awareness that the imprecision of the world might be inherent and that this should therefore be an essential component of any theory.

Jennifer Coates: 'The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries'

Traditional research has focused on modality exclusively in terms of modal auxiliaries, as they are the most grammaticalized components of the modal system and also likely to be easily explored. Modals have drawn the attention of many generations of grammarians who regarded them in connection with the subjunctive or just being an expression of it. This sort of approach to the nature of modals can be explained by the fact that “modals came to be used in much the same syntactic positions as those in which the subjunctive forms of main verbs had been used in earlier stages of the language.” However, it is only when a subjunctive form in the same syntactic position can replace the modal and when the two express the same or a related meaning that we can speak about the modals as being subjunctive equivalents. (Hermerén 1978: 12-13)

In general, the grammarians' great interest in the modals as special exponents of modality is due to the cardinal concepts that they express. Modals have evolved in their nature from the functions of the subjunctive to a prominent place in the English language. This progression is a likely cause of their complexity, semantic irregularity and unpredictability. This very complexity has made modals a problematic area in the semantics of English. Most linguists, however, focus in their investigations of the modals on their semantic rather than their syntactic functions. Well-known monosemous²⁴ approaches regard modals as context-dependent expressions; their linguistic semantics is fundamentally determined by the general meaning they communicate. However, the semantic investigation of the modals is still not uncontroversial. The latest research on the history of modals in English as well as in many other distinct languages, together with research on grammaticalization, have demonstrated that root modality and epistemic modality are interconnected, and that epistemic modal meanings can be consequential to root meanings. (Traugott 1989)

²⁴ The discussion about advantages and problems about homonymy, monosemy and polysemy in the domain of modality can be found in Coates (1983) and Papafragou (2000) among others.

Epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's assumptions (*must, should* and *ought*) or assessment of possibilities (*may, might, could* and *will*) and, in most cases, it reveals the speaker's confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed. It can also express the speaker's hesitations about declaring the truth of the proposition. (Coates 1983: 18-20) Ultimately, epistemic modality deals with opinions which are based on the speaker's knowledge of what is said.

American Pastoral is "the narrative version of the matryoshka doll, where Roth speaks through his perennial narrator, Nathan Zuckerman²⁵, who speaks for his high school hero, "the Swede", who speaks for his daughter Merry, the detonator of the bomb." (Sigrist-Sutton 2010: 54) The central structure of the novel is a mirror whose narrative logic makes the Swede the embodiment of the American idealism and the cultural assimilation that the American dream entails; Merry represents the activism of the sixties and is an intensely vocal member of the radicals who rebel against the corporate state, which they believed was too rigid and opposed to change, thus preventing new initiatives and ideas. It is therefore this encounter of two kinds of social consciousness reflected by the epistemic modals that we are trying to uncover.

Our main focus in this section is the occurrences of the modals *must, should, need, can, could, might, may, will* and *would* in dealing with the Swede's belief-set, but also the narrator's and other characters' assumptions about the Swede in the novel. We will investigate the semantic characteristics of the modal verbs, but it is by their formal characteristics that they are defined. However, we need to be aware of the fact that language is not in all respects a well-ordered phenomenon, and when it comes to meaning, indeterminacy seems to be an intrinsic part of the language. It is then of significance to deal with indeterminacy and distinguish between the epistemic meanings the best we can by recognizing categories and definitions we have available and which we make reference to.

In their most common subjective interpretation, all epistemic modals can be generally positioned at the two ends of the scale whose extremes represent confidence and doubt. It is

²⁵ Nathan Zuckerman is Philip Roth's fictional character who the author uses as his protagonist and narrator in many of his novels.

generally assumed that *must* represents high confidence in the truth of the proposition or a strong judgment. (Coates 1983; Palmer 1986) In the interpretation of the epistemic *must* there are two elements of meaning to be taken into consideration: first, that it represents a logical conclusion, and second, the degree to which the speaker expresses his/her confidence in the proposition.

One interesting approach to the exploration of *must* (Westmoreland 1988) is to view *must* not as epistemic but rather as an evidential, marking the source of information for the utterance. In this case the source of information is deduction, indicating that the reliability of the utterance has been inferred via some sort of evidence. However, de Haan (2009) cautions us that while it is true that deduction is often considered as an evidential category, there are good reasons to be wary of the terminology.

While it is true that *must* can be analyzed as a modal that draws conclusions from evidence, this does not automatically mean that *must* is an evidential. It is not clear that evidentials draw conclusions from evidence. Rather, evidentials show that there is evidence for the statement the speaker is making, without drawing any (modal) conclusion from that evidence. (de Haan 2009: 268)

We can see in 11) that *must* behaves as inferential in nature due to the evidence present in the contextual situation. Indeed, most of the non-deontic occurrences of *must* are frequently used with overt evidence in the context, often accompanied by the word *because*. We are able to see the way *must* interacts with and interprets that evidence.

11) *Righteous anger at the daughter? No doubt that would have helped. Incontestable that nothing is more uplifting in all of life than righteous anger. But given the circumstances, wasn't it asking a lot, asking the Swede to overstep the limits that made him identifiably the Swede? People must have been doing that to him all his life, assuming that because he was once upon a time this mythic character the Swede he had no limits.* (AP: 72)

An important aspect of the Swede's life is his spirit of containment and emotional control. He strongly believes in working hard, being patient and tolerant, and maintaining the setup of a life in full accordance with the social norms. Merry's insurgence is meant to shake his entire belief-system in the family unit as a fundamental symbol of a correct life.

At the same time, Zuckerman has no direct evidence for his statements, and the use of *must*, such as in 11), is meant to get into the Swede's mind, but since this is not exactly possible without real evidence, he is purely speculating. And yet, *must* expresses the narrator's confidence that his speculation is valid. The validity of his utterance is also determined by the readers' knowledge of the earlier propositions made in the novel and which also serve, subconsciously, to regard *must* as drawing a conclusion based on information available to us and communicated by the narrator.

In 12) Zuckerman is referring to an event, the riots Merry was part of, the violence she performed, and the blame and guilt the Swede felt after that. He is not aiming at a factual propositional domain as value; if he had access to the facts, he would have made an unmodalised utterance. However, the narrator lacks ample knowledge of what happened at the appropriate time in the past. All he can do, therefore, is reason on the basis of incomplete and relatively supported evidence, which he recreates from situation-specific information.

12) *I began to contemplate the very thing that must have baffled the Swede till the moment he died: how had he become history's plaything? (AP: 87)*

Here we can see that Zuckerman makes an observational utterance, expressing a proposition verifiable through perception. The narrator's perceptual beliefs, based on the Swede's attitude towards responsibility and the way he organized his life around this rule, is causally related to the structure of the Swede's reality.

Since we trust our perceptual experience to deliver information of high epistemological respectability, it follows that other sources of knowledge (e.g. inference) will be valued less when it comes to the assessment of the same piece of information. (Papafragou 2000: 74)

The same piece of information is actually what the narrator shared with another character in the novel, namely the Swede's brother, but he uses that information to reproduce his own perception of that piece of information. Responsibility is one of the core concepts of the novel; responsibility is also one of the Swede's fundamental values in life. It becomes natural for Zuckerman to assume that the Swede regarded himself responsible for Merry's outburst, a feeling of guilt we see that he is trying to deal with throughout the novel. It also represents the deductive starting point for the narrator's confidence in his process of logical inference, which is largely based on the way responsibility manifests itself at the core of all aspects of the Swede's life.

13) *I am thinking of the Swede's great fall and of how he must have imagined that it was founded on some failure of his own responsibility. There is where it must begin. It doesn't matter if he was the cause of anything. He makes himself responsible anyway. He has been doing that all his life, making himself unnaturally responsible, keeping under control not just himself but whatever else threatens to be uncontrollable, giving his all to keep his world together. (AP: 88)*

The narrator becomes almost obsessed with understanding the Swede and trying to fit the failures of his later life with the perfect image he and everybody else had of the Swede.²⁶ Thus he tries to create multiple layers of identity and subjectivity, exploring their positions and counter-positions. What makes the novel remarkable is that Roth uses the Swede himself to give us his own perspective and evaluation of his realities, but also the perspective of others, keeping the readers awake and in a continuous attempt to understand the multitude of subjective views and evaluations of the same realities, but also to determine whose fault it was that Merry ended up being the opposite of what the Swede tried to build up his whole life.

In all three examples we can see that the narrator indicates his impressions/inferences that render his judgments of possibility in the past, which may or may not coincide with the judgements of the present, but which implies a logical conclusion reached on the basis of some presently available evidence. Zuckerman tries to imagine, based on present realities, how the Swede felt and perceived what happened to him. As evidence he presents the Swede's past way of life, his beliefs and how they could have shaped his reactions to his daughter's partaking in ruining that life.

Moreover, Zuckerman expresses a strong judgement, which is to be pursued in the fact that he has some objective knowledge available, from which he can deduce the certainty of the conclusions presented by *must*. It becomes clear to us then that *must* is not purely epistemic, i.e. it does not merely express the speaker's unaffected opinion, but it is also inferential-

²⁶ What Zuckerman is reflecting over in *American Pastoral* is what he also does in two other Roth's novels, *The Ghost Writer* and *The Counterlife*.

evidential²⁷, i.e. it also specifies that the speaker draws his conclusion on the basis of a logical interpretation.

14) *The Jewishness that he wore so lightly as one of the tall, blond athletic winners must have spoken to us too—in our idolizing the Swede and his unconscious oneness with America...* (AP: 19)

Besides being naturally charming, the Swede represents the greater arena of an American underdog succeeding in world affairs, supposedly a reflection of the confident self-image that many Americans felt at that time. *Must* in example 14) indicates the narrator, who was once among those who worshipped the Swede, being part of the general community adulation of the all-American hero, and who is now the ‘objective’ voice of that admiration and its sources, which he tries to explore in retrospect; *must* in this statement is pointing to the Swede’s Jewishness, blondness and height among the evidence available to him. Therefore, *must* clearly encapsulates an inferential activity moving from ambiguous propositions which, once substantiated, result in the necessity of the conclusion.

Further, we cannot leave out a few equivocal readings of *should*, which poses more difficulty when separating its epistemic meaning from the deontic one, (Narrog 2012: 173) as these instances of *should* seem to be quite significant when dealing with the issue of success and hard work underlying the entire concept of the American dream.

Therefore, it is of significance to have the context available in order to make a distinction between the deontic and epistemic *should*, as they generally seem inseparable.

15) *If that wasn’t sufficiently inspiring—the miraculous conclusion of this towering event, the clock of history reset and a whole people’s aims limited no longer by the past—there was the neighborhood, the communal determination that we, the children, should escape poverty, ignorance, disease, social injury and intimidation—escape, above all, insignificance. You must not come to nothing! Make something of yourselves!* (AP: 40)

The deontic reading of *should* here seems to be straightforward; however, I want to argue that *should* could also be interpreted as epistemic necessity in 15). Considering the context of this example, it largely refers to an inner necessity and as the outcome of the Swede’s conforming attitude to social expectations. He chose willingly to escape poverty and it became part of his

²⁷ The inferential-evidential meaning assigned to *must* in English can be found in Coates (1983:41) among others.

subjective reality, his approach to an assimilationist perspective on his life. It is also meant to point out the Swede's devotion to responsibility, which is at the core of the American way of life.

Notions such as 'prediction', 'expectation' or 'probability' have been supposed to characterize the semantic account of *should*. (Bybee et al. 1994) One more thing worth mentioning about *should* in 15) is that *should* is generally used in the case of likelihood based on future expectations and confirmable in the future, whereas *must* is based on present speculation and verifiable in the present. And so *should* in 15) reflects what the community and neighbourhood expected of all their children, to attempt and escape the neediness and destitution they were living in, and make something better with their lives, expectations decidedly verifiable in the future.

The deontic interpretation of *must* is less controversial in 15), though. *Must* here has the function to communicate the urges of 'the neighborhood' and the 'communal determination' that they (the children) 'must' do whatever it takes in order to better their lot, because the opportunities were there for them to be seized.

There are cases when modals can accept both root and epistemic interpretations, as the utterance is to some degree pragmatically indeterminate. Indeterminacy results from the simple fact that the utterance cannot be indisputably interpreted in isolation. However, on supplementary contextual information, one can make it feasible to discriminate which interpretation was the one proposed by the narrator. It would appear then that in all these instances, the modal interpretation of the sentence with an epistemic modal does not really depend exclusively on the modal verb, but on the evidence it refers to. However, the reading of any epistemic modal (and/or evidential) is largely dependent not only on the context of the utterance or its preceding sentences; it relies on the comprehensive knowledge we have of the situation from the information available in the novel in general.

The loyalty with which the Swede embraced the American value of hard work and self-control has a powerful effect on us: he is truly committed to the values of a country that offered opportunities for all. This we know not only by reading the following example, but

also throughout the whole novel, where this particular principle permeates all strata of the Swede's life.

16) *Unsavory as the job must have seemed to him, it had to be done...* (AP: 332)

This is yet again a perfect example where the epistemic *must*, which is rather evidential, is used by Zuckerman to reconstitute *American Pastoral*'s protagonist's subjectivity and introduce an arena where the reader is able to see how the Swede embraces any outer obligation as a personal necessity; this represents one way Roth describes the Swede's consistent assimilationist perspective, demarcated in the novel by key American representational markers, such as hard work and self-restraint. And so, *must* having an epistemic reading and *had to* a deontic interpretation, exposes the close interconnection between obligation and necessity for the Swede.

It follows then that the necessary evidence is implicit in the speaker's mind and is made available to us by the overall information shared throughout the discourse. Thus, we can conclude that "it is an integral part of the meaning of *must* that it evaluates evidence. The level of confidence in the truth of the evaluation is of secondary importance."²⁸ (de Haan 2009: 272) Ultimately, whether *must* is an epistemic modal or an evidential is irrelevant, and it applies to the question whether a modal is an epistemic or an evidential category as well: it is only via a concrete, verifiable postulation that we are able to determine the interpretation of *must*.

Furthermore, *should* can also be depicted as an inferential evidential that encourages conclusions from us the readers. The Swede's life reveals his lack of need to ask lots of existential questions and *should* in an interrogative sentence is meant to encourage us to reach a conclusion for ourselves whether that was an actual necessity at all. *Should* can undoubtedly summarise "a deductive process moving from uncertain premises [...] to the necessity of the conclusion." (Pietrandrea 2005: 86)

17) *Never in his life had occasion to ask himself, 'Why are things the way they are?' 'Why should he bother, when the way they were was always perfect? 'Why are things the way they are? The question to which there is*

²⁸ De Haan goes even further and claims that *must* is not an archetypal strong epistemic modal.

no answer, and up till then he was so blessed he didn't even know the question existed. (AP: 69)

Moreover, when it comes to the construal of *should*, even though one might worry about the possibility of presenting *should* with both root and epistemic interpretations because of its conventional and normative constraints, it does not represent a problem, since it is precisely the semantic information which permits both types of interpretation of *should*. Root interpretations ensue when normative suppositions are considered as representations of external states of affairs, whereas epistemic interpretations result from the expectation-conforming evidence, the latter being based exclusively on internal propositional representations.

Some modals, however, do not unequivocally express only one type of modality. And even though *have to* is not a true modal, no discussion of *must* or of the modals of obligation and necessity would be complete without reference to it. (Coates 1983: 52)

18) *The responsibility of the school hero follows him through life. Noblesse oblige. You're the hero, so then you have to behave in a certain way—there is a prescription for it. You have to be modest, you have to be forbearing, you have to be deferential, you have to be understanding. (AP: 79)*

As we can see, *have to* can undoubtedly express a more ambiguous flavour of modality, depending on the contextual dynamics. We are able to see that dynamics in our text, which reflects how “spectacularly chameleonic” the modal *have to* can be in English. (Von Fintel&Gillies 2007: 34) In 18) the use of *have to* is pretty straightforwardly deontic, even though we feel tempted to consider the possibility of a slight epistemic interpretation, because all the things the Swede *has to be* are actually necessities he regards important because of his idol status he feels compelled to live up to. And while indeed these are more or less obligations that are of external nature, they take on the form of necessities the Swede believes he *has to be* in order to maintain the image of a national hero, beliefs that also stem from the expectations others have of him. Nevertheless, a deontic interpretation of *have to* in 18) seems like a fair agreement when dealing with its unsettled nature.

In addition, it is interesting to have a look at *need*, which takes on modal meanings mainly when used in negated sentences and questions. (Narrog 2012: 191) When dealing with the modal *need*, we have to take into account the aspect of participant-internal necessity versus external forces.²⁹ In the following excerpt *need* appears to be reconcilable with an inner urge of the subject, who is the Swede, to stop being shamed into humiliation and regret by his daughter Merry for believing in his American pleasures, happiness and success. *Need* is possibly the modal which reflects internal necessity where the target of the need is at the same time the source, as is the case in our following passage:

19) *Hate America? Why, he lived in America the way he lived inside his own skin. All the pleasures of his younger years were American pleasures, all that success and happiness had been American, and he need no longer keep his mouth shut about it just to defuse her ignorant hatred. ... Yes, everything that gave meaning to his accomplishments had been American. Everything he loved was here. (AP: 213)*

One aspect of the use of *need* is that it is in direct rivalry with more prevailing modal verbs of necessity, particularly *must* and *should*.³⁰ Its specificities, though, lie in the fact that it “came to occupy specific niches where it specialized on negated and interrogative uses on the one hand, and participant-internal uses on the other hand.” (Narrog 2012: 212) Besides, the lexical association with the noun *need*, which denotes an inherent absence, is probably another element that contributed to the subsequent association with an inner necessity, as is the case in 20).

20) *Thrown violently off his own narrow perch, he felt an intangible need open hugely within him, a need with no bottom to it, and he yielded to a solution so foreign to him that he did not even recognize how improbable it was. (AP: 355)*

Furthermore, on a closer examination of the meaning of *need* we come across a semantic shift that goes past inner necessity. Palmer (1990: 129) declares that besides indicating what is required for particular purposes or personal intentions, *need* is also particularly subject oriented; in addition, it is not always the case that the necessity comes from the subject himself.

²⁹ An aspect that is not undisputed. According to Loureiro-Porto (2009:147), for instance, need expresses most frequently a 'general' rather than 'internal' necessity.

³⁰ *Need* had actually a late arrival, it only started to increase in frequency in late Middle English.

21) *As a businessman the Swede was astute, and if need be, beneath the genial surface of the man's man—capitalizing on the genial surface—he could be as artfully calculating as the deal required.* (AP: 239)

As we have mentioned several times before, what characterizes the Swede best is his conformity to the norms and to what is expected of him. The use of *need* here is meant to reflect how necessity is generally set about by others and adopted by him as part of what is required of him to do in order to uphold his role of the perfect businessman, husband and friend; and so, externally caused necessity becomes internalised and assumed as his own.

In addition, the epistemic *need* has also the meaning that something is foreseeable and expected, and which can also be rephrased with *bound to*. (Coates 1983: 51) This looks to be the case of the second *need* in 22), where the Swede is compared and identified with the legendary Johnny Appleseed.³¹

22) *No brains probably, but didn't need 'em— a great walker was all Johnny Appleseed needed to be.* (AP: 316)

Johnny Appleseed was a happy American whose life epitomized the assimilative fantasy of the American dream. A big stride and a bag of seeds was all that he needed to feel happy, no national or religious affiliation is relevant when contemplating his life; all that matters is that he is the blissful American to have achieved the American dream.

Furthermore, by looking at the occurrences of *can* in the novel, we are able to distinguish what characterizes the use of epistemic *can*, where it “denotes the possibility of an event taking place depending on a multitude of unspecified circumstances” (Narrog 2012: 121), circumstances which largely refer to the incidents Merry is involved in.

23) *Ever since leaving Merry in that cell, behind that veil, he has known that he's no longer a man who can endlessly forestall being crushed.* (AP: 372)

Can might refer in 23) both to the Swede's inference and to the objective likelihood of circumstances that would sanction potential events in the future, which are based on all earlier events and incidents he experienced.

³¹ An American pioneer and legend due to his kindness and generosity, and who is famous for introducing apple trees to great parts of the US and displaying leadership in conservation.

24) *“What can be done for her?” he was growling, and all the while, down on his knees, carefully gathering together the shattered fragments of the glass and dumping them into Dawn’s wastebasket. “What can be done for her? What can be done for anyone? Nothing can be done. (AP: 379)*

This extract describes one of the many situations when the Swede and his wife Dawn are trying to understand what went wrong and how they can help remedy the situation of their daughter. Coates believes that when it comes to the semantic nature of *can*, the distinction between root and epistemic possibility proves to be “considerably weaker than in other root/epistemic pairs.” (1995: 56) This makes possibility more challenging than necessity when trying to determine where epistemicity begins.

The volitive use of *can*, expressing wish or permission does not represent ability, but circumstantial possibility. Most of the examples revealing some sort of ambiguity around the use of *can* reflect the vagueness between permission and possibility due to circumstances; *can*, used in connection with the things that are possible to do for Merry, are largely related to external circumstances, which are out of the Swede’s control. This shift from circumstantial possibility to epistemic possibility represents the conversion from less to more speaker-oriented non-volitive modality.

Moreover, not all modals express past time reference through their past tense forms (Palmer 1979: 29-30), and thus the past tense form of *can* is only an extension of its meaning, and it is rather “the expression of a particular type of presupposition.” More specifically, Larreya, who refers to all past tense forms of the modals as ‘-ED morphemes’, claims that they express “some type of presupposed unreality.” (2003: 21)

25) *He was very stoical. He was a very nice, simple, stoical guy. Not a humorous guy. Not a passionate guy. Just a sweetheart whose fate it was to get himself fucked over by some real crazies. In one way he could be conceived as completely banal and conventional. An absence of negative values and nothing more. (AP: 65)*

From the semantic point of view, the past tense form is sometimes designated as the indicator of some kind of distance between the event and the reality of the present moment. In our example, Jerry, the Swede’s brother, makes a presupposition concerned with circumstantial possibility expressed by *could*. There is also an evidential component in the use of *could*

here, as Jerry refers extensively to the way the Swede appears to the others: banal, conventional, simple, nice, qualities that make him a rather boring guy with no deep intense inner world to hide beneath his lack of ‘negative values’.

26) *Banal, conventional—maybe, maybe not. People could think that. I don't want to get into judging. (AP: 65)*

This statement reflects a presupposed reality and its main purpose is to inform the reader about the way it was natural for the people to see/perceive the Swede. And even if it expresses only a presupposition, it appeals to the reader as the logic that takes place in reality, and that it is a logic that the addressees would anticipate.

27) *“You know Seymour's ‘fatal attraction’? Fatally attracted to his duty,” Jerry said. “Fatally attracted to responsibility. He could have played ball anywhere he wanted, but he went to Upsala because my father wanted him near home. (AP: 72)*

The Swede's brother, Jerry, gives us another evaluation of the Swede's attitude towards duty and responsibility. But unlike the case of *must*, *could* expresses less speaker commitment to the truth of the proposition. It is/was a possibility and prospect for the Swede to play in any other place in or outside the country, but Jerry only speculates about the likelihood of that happening; and even if ‘could have played’ reflects a speculative statement, it again reflects how the feeling of responsibility made the Swede stay in Upsala, because he knew that his father would have preferred that. Furthermore, we are able to observe that *could* has a temporal component in 28), but it also includes some type of implicit unreality, and which is rather absolute and direct.

28) *How captivatingly that innocence spoke to my own. The significance he had given me. It was everything a boy could have wanted in 1943. (AP: 70)*

And as Palmer (1990: 97) suggests, *could* is accompanied by *have* in examples like this one in order to make it clear that it does not refer to a conditional in the present and to communicate factual simultaneity instead. However, even though this kind of factual example is compatible with the meanings of ability and general root possibility, we embrace Depraetere's hypothesis that “this use of *could* + perfect infinitive only occurs in a clearly presuppositional context.” (2009: 301)

One controversial issue in a lot of research is the blurry line between the uses of *could* and *might*, which seem to have almost the same meaning. One opinion, shared by Coates (1983: 167), is the one that considers that “*might* is becoming the main exponent of epistemic possibility in every day spoken language”, and that “*could* is filling the gap left by *might* and is the new exponent of tentative epistemic possibility.” Conversely, Gresset (2003: 82) claims that *might* and *could* are not synonymous, but that doesn’t mean that the distinction there is between them affects the meaning of the utterance to the point that it means something entirely different and may therefore cause misinterpretation.³²

29) *No matter how much it might openly enrage her to answer him, no matter how sarcastic and caustic and elusive and dishonest her answers might be, he continued to question her about her political activities, about her after-school whereabouts, about her new friends; with a gentle persistence that infuriated her, he asked about her Saturday trips into New York. She could shout all she wanted at home—she was still just a kid from Old Rimrock, and the thought of whom she might meet in New York alarmed him. (AP: 103)*

This passage reveals how *could* and *might*, which are highly context-dependent for interpretation, offer very similar meanings. However, *could* expresses a higher degree of probability, while *might* is more cautious in nature, and consequently less probable. However, the use of *could* in 29) is another case of contentious interpretation where the deontic reading of the modal *could* is the first one to be detected. *Could* is used in connection with Merry ‘shouting all she wanted’ because it was something that she regularly did (considering all the scenes from the novel); but the use of *could* can also be construed as pointing to a situation where Merry found it easy to shout and defy her parents, particularly her father. The argument for an epistemic reading of *could* in 29) would be the knowledge the Swede has of his daughter’s outbursts and that they were real and true, the angry scenes in the novel serving also as evidence for his proposition.

As far as *might* goes, it refers to all those things that happened in New York, but which are less probable, as the Swede has absolutely no knowledge of them or if they ever existed in the first place.

³² If *could* is replacing *might* as the main exponent of tentative epistemic possibility, then it would follow that *could* and *might* are to be considered as more or less interchangeable. (Gresset 2003: 83)

Furthermore, Coates (1983: 167) suggests that in most contexts *might* is synonymous with *may*, as we can see in the following example:

30) *Merry has a credo, Dawn, Merry has a political position. There may not be much subtlety in it, she may not yet be its best spokesman, but there is some thought behind it, there's certainly a lot of emotion behind it, there's a lot of compassion behind it...* (AP: 101)

The Swede expresses his assessment of Merry's chance of having a political career, but because of her rage and incensed behaviour, the Swede is very cautious about his propositions and evaluations. As a matter of fact, in this example *may* reflects a very low degree of probability, and it is meant to hint at the evidence which is quite opposite in nature to the reality described; it cannot be dismissed as impossible though, a meaning that *may* expresses brilliantly; besides, it can also be interpreted as the Swede's hope that things will turn out for the best. That being the case, the Swede is trying to make generalizations about the future of his daughter, and the use of *may* communicates the fact that this 'might/may' be their wish, but that it is not necessarily embraced by other members of the society, that there is a good chance that his utterances will not hold for everybody else.

Subsequently, the interpretation of *will* has been observed in English to be similar to an evidential (Coates 1983: 177-9; Palmer 1986: 24-5, 1990: 57) among others. It is interesting to look at the use of *will* in our novel, as it generally does not signify a future event. Typically, the use of *will* is associated with the use of *must*. In Palmer's view, *must* is used to mark a "firm judgement, on the basis of evidence" (1986: 25), while *will* indicates that the judgement is substantiated by general knowledge. The problem that might arise from such an approach is that it is quite difficult to draw a distinct line between 'judgement on the basis of evidence' and 'general knowledge'. This proves to be the case of the following passage:

31) *It is Jerry's theory that the Swede is nice, that is to say passive, that is to say trying always to do the right thing, a socially controlled character who doesn't burst out, doesn't yield to rage ever. Will not have the angry quality as his liability, so doesn't get it as an asset either.* (AP: 71)

We can look at *will* here expressing judgement on the basis of knowledge, but it can also be considered general knowledge, as the knowledge Jerry has of his brother can also be the one shared by others who knew the Swede. Besides, Zuckerman seems to use Jerry's voice in order to convey a general impression of the Swede. Moreover, the change of *will* from

future/prediction points towards increased speech act orientation within non-volitive modality. Various researchers have suggested that future markers, which also have a modal epistemic meaning that is not restricted to being a prediction, can later advance to having a full epistemic meaning. (Narrog 2012: 171)

One more thing worth pointing out is that the meanings of the past tense forms of the modals is meant to make presuppositions that are implicit in nature and that it is only the past tense form of the modals, more specifically *could* and *would*, that can be used to express a *narrative* past. (Larrea 2003: 40)

32) *How else would the Swede explain it to himself? It has to be a transgression, a single transgression, even if it is only he who identifies it as a transgression. The disaster that befalls him begins in a failure of his responsibility, as he imagines it. But what could that have been? (AP: 89)*

Palmer (1986) calls epistemic *would* tentative and Coates (1983) proclaims that it expresses the predictability of some past action or state. However, “the use of epistemic *would* conventionally implicates that the speaker believes she or he has conclusive objective (that is, empirical or logical) evidence for the truth of the proposition encoded in the utterance. This rules out, among other things, decisions, predictions and wild guesses.” (Ward, Birner&Kaplan 2003: 75)

33) *The loneliness he would feel as a man without all his American feelings. The longing he would feel if he had to live in another country. (AP: 213)*

We can emphatically argue that the last approach to the epistemic effect of *would* is skilfully illustrated in 33). Beside the fact that Zuckerman uses evidential information to describe the genuine love the Swede has for everything American, based on his own but also of others’ perception of him, it is actually through the Swede’s own inner voice that we get a glimpse of his feelings for America.

Ultimately, epistemic interpretations of modals occur in situations in which it is reciprocally manifest that an individual, in drawing a conclusion, is not in a position to consider every utterance that could have an impact on its truth, because s/he is unfamiliar with existing evidence. The speaker will then draw the most reasonable conclusion fitting currently

accessible evidence. It follows then that the speaker comes to a logical deduction whose grounds are still more or less questionable, so it consequently gets a low degree of strength.

What sets epistemic interpretations apart from other modal interpretations is that both the proposition embedded under the modal and the evidence for it are metarepresentational assumptions capturing the individual's internal representation of reality, which are likely to evolve and be revised, as new evidence becomes available. (Papafragou 2000: 78)

3.4 Epistemic necessities and possibilities in *American Pastoral*: modal adverbs

There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something...You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after.

J.R. Tolkien: 'The Hobbit'

Epistemic adverbs are occasionally assumed to be functionally identical to epistemic modal verbs. However, one significant distinction between modal adverbs and epistemic modals is that modal adverbs, such as *probably* and *certainly*, are less complicated in terms of deixis³³, unlike epistemic modals, which include an additional deictic function; they are also undoubtedly more complex. However, one fundamental property both epistemic adverbs and epistemic modals share is their mutual denominator: both of them designate the speaker's assessment of the probability of the reported event. Just as in the case of epistemic modals, which signal different degrees of probability assigned to propositions, so do epistemic adverbs.

And so, "on the epistemic scale, *certainly* is the extreme positive end, *probably* is more or less in the middle on the positive side of the scale, *possibly* is near or at the neutral point, in the middle between the positive and the negative side of the scale." (Nuyts 2000: 55) This, of course, does not mean that there cannot be any deviation in the degree of likelihood expressed by these forms, depending on contextual occurrences. Additionally, just as in the case of epistemic modals, many forms of epistemic adverbs may be both epistemic and evidential, expressing inferences as an evidential dimension; besides, they express epistemic evaluation as well.

³³ Footnote 3 on p.16

Furthermore, it is not uncommon among translators to resort to epistemic adverbs when having to translate epistemic modals into a language that has a limited system of modal verbs. However, the problem with that kind of practice is that in the process of translation one loses an important aspect of the communicative purposes, which is the source of information. This leads us to another important distinction between epistemic modals and epistemic adverbs: epistemic modals, unlike epistemic adverbs, implicate a rupture of the centre of judgment into two distinctive segments, one being the speaker's attitude towards the proposition, and the other being the source of the speaker's information.³⁴ "First, the speaker distances herself from the proposition in judging it (this being true for both epistemic modals and epistemic adverbs), and second, the speaker is presented as distant from the source of evidence, this being true only for epistemic modal verbs." (Abraham&Leiss 2008: 37)

As previously stated, *certainly* represents the extreme positive end on the epistemic scale, and is generally included among the epistemic adverbs that are closest in meaning with *undoubtedly* and *indubitably*, which implies that there is an absence of any doubt in the speaker's statements. And while *certainly* in a sentence-initial position is not an epistemic adverb at all (it is rather conversational) (Wierzbicka 2006: 285), the sentence-internal *certainly* is an indisputable epistemic adverb. And even if the assumption is that epistemic adverbs express a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker (Cinque 1999), this does not apply to *certainly*.

34) *Merry has a credo, Dawn. Merry has a political position. There may not be much subtlety in it, she may not yet be its best spokesman, but there is some thought behind it, there's certainly a lot of emotion behind it, there's a lot of compassion behind it. . . . (AP: 101)*

35) *You can't explain away what I've done by motives, Daddy. I certainly wouldn't explain away what you've done by motives. (AP: 250)*

The first thing to note about the epistemic adverb *certainly* is that it is used particularly in connection with the Swede and Merry's feelings. They have very strong beliefs about what is wrong and right and are determined to defend them no matter what. *Certainly* in both 34) and

³⁴ 1) e.g. He pretends to have been in Greenland (but I see it differently) – The subject of the proposition is the very source of the judgement of the speaker. 2) He is said to have been in Greenland (and I cite the indirect evidence, nothing more) – It refers to a person close to the speaker, being close enough to witness the event of which truth conditions are evaluated. 3) He must have been in Greenland (as far as I am in a position to judge) – The source on which the speaker relies upon is the speaker himself. (Abraham&Leiss 2008: 36)

35) refers to the way Merry communicates her rage and discontent with both America and her father's liberal ideals. The words and energy she puts into expressing her rage are so powerful and bewildering for both her father and mother, that there is no doubt about the intensity behind them.

36) *You don't reveal yourself to people, Seymour. You keep yourself a secret. Nobody knows what you are. You certainly never let her know who you are. That's what she's been blasting away at—that façade.* (AP: 275)

The Swede's beliefs that one has to endure whatever one goes through, and not rebel and complain, is what makes Merry angry with her father. By trying to keep up with the perfect image of a model American he has to create an image for himself and stick to it. And even though this seems hard to see as necessary and fulfilling by his daughter, the Swede knows no other way. It is Dawn, the Swede's wife, who tells him that Merry rebels against this 'façade' which he insists on maintaining, and *certainly* in this context expresses the lack of any doubt as to the truth of the statement: it is a truth acknowledged not only by his daughter, but others as well, who undoubtedly believe that kindness does not exist in pure form.

37) *Maybe what was agitating him was that the self-adjustments on which she was building a recovery were not regenerative for him or entirely admirable to him, were even something of an affront to him. He could not tell people—certainly couldn't convince himself—that he hated the things he'd loved...* (AP: 205)

Besides, *certainly* in 37) reflects the powerfulness of his beliefs and life ideals and how challenging, if not impossible, it seems to him, even after reimagining all scenarios of his life, to find them erroneous or defective.

In 38) we come across the same example where the Swede is compared with Johnny Appleseed, and where we can detect a slightly derogatory portrayal of the two. As like other epistemic adverbs, *probably* designates that the narrator assumes something and also that he refrains from claiming knowledge. Besides, we tend to believe that the use of the epistemic *probably* is actually employed to attenuate the demeaning tone of the narrator's voice and soften the strength of the statement.

38) *Johnny Appleseed was just a happy American. Big. Ruddy. Happy. No brains probably, but didn't need 'em—a great walker was all Johnny Appleseed needed to be. All physical joy.* (AP: 316)

“*Probably* is the most important of all English epistemic adverbs, insofar as it is the most frequent and the most widely used one (across a wide range of registers and types of discourse).” (Wierzbicka 2006: 261) Since *probably* tends to be less scientific and intellectual, it is mainly entrenched in English colloquial speech, and is rather replaced by the more formal epistemic adjective *probable* in written language. We come across very few occurrences of *probably* in the novel.

Another epistemic adverb, which is closely related to the meaning expressed by *probably*, is the epistemic adverb *likely*, more frequently used in American English than British English. *Likely* can be interpreted as communicating a speaker’s supposition based on personal experience or mirrors a person’s predisposition to act in a particular way, both being efficiently illustrated in the following excerpts:

39) *How does a child get to be like this? Can anyone be utterly without thoughtfulness? The answer is yes. His only contact with his daughter was this child who did not know anything and would say anything and more than likely do anything—resort to anything to excite herself. Her opinions were all stimuli: the goal was excitement. (AP: 139)*

40) *She listed in the diary what topics she could expect to talk about with different people, wrote down the points she would try to make, anticipating when she was most likely to stutter and getting herself thoroughly prepared. How could she bear the hardship of all that self-consciousness? (AP: 99)*

Both uses of the epistemic adverb *likely* we quote here, and in other occurrences in the novel as well, are used in connection with Merry’s stuttering and behaviour, and as Wierzbicka puts it, “*likely* is more subjective, more impressionistic, and more applicable to possible events that are unpredictable and unknowable.” (2006: 269) If there is something more unpredictable in the novel, then that’s definitely Merry’s stuttering, which many critics regard as a symbol of the historical stumbling that was taking place in America during the late sixties.

There are very few uses of *possibly* in the novel, and as *possibly* and *perhaps* seem to be chosen randomly, we do notice a more frequent use of *perhaps*. *Possibly* tends to be vigilant, careful, introspective, and intellectually reliable. (Ibid: 276) However, the function of *possibly* in the following example, among the few others, do not quite reflect the epistemic

adverb; since it is used in the collocations *could possibly* and *can possibly*, it has rather the function of an intensifier as to the way the Swede feels about Merry's criticism as preposterous and utterly unreasonable.

41) *A desperate man was giving himself over to a treacherous girl not because she could possibly begin to know what went wrong but because there was no one else to give himself over to. (AP: 138)*

Furthermore, Lyons (1981: 238) makes a distinction between modal adverbs, such as *possibly*, and modal particles, such as *perhaps*, but this tends to make unclear an essential semantic and cultural property of modern English, specifically, its amazing expansion of what Lyons calls 'subjective epistemic modality'.³⁵ As both epistemic adverbs and modal markers fulfil the same communicative goals and needs, we have to look beyond different forms and needs and focus on their ultimate meaning. Thus, *maybe* and *perhaps* are semantic equivalents not only in English but also in many other languages. (Wierzbicka 2006: 250) Besides, as already mentioned in Chapter 2, we regard epistemic adverbs as inseparable from modal particles³⁶.

42) *Once again I began to think that he might be mentally unsound, that this smile could perhaps be an indication of derangement. There was no sham in it—and that was the worst of it. The smile wasn't insincere. He wasn't imitating anything. (AP: 36)*

Nathan Zuckerman finds it challenging to figure out his childhood hero, Seymour Levov, who seems to have it all. His incredulity about the Swede's kind face and demeanour is disconcerting and makes him believe that it is possible that the Swede is not mentally sound, since the sincerity he displays is so amazingly genuine. *Perhaps* designates both his disbelief and lack of confidence as to where the truth about the Swede's personality lies.

43) *Perhaps the mistake was to have tried so hard to take seriously what was in no way serious; perhaps what he should have done, instead of listening*

³⁵ As far as making statements is concerned, there are various ways in which a locutionary agent can qualify his epistemic commitment. He can indicate that his evidence for what he asserts is less good than it might be; that his commitment is tentative, provisional or conditional, rather than absolute; and so on. Subjective epistemic modality is nothing other than this: the locutionary agent's qualification of his epistemic commitment. All natural spoken languages provide their users with the prosodic resources—stress and intonation—with which to express these several distinguishable kinds of qualified epistemic commitment. Some, but by no means all, grammaticalize them in the category of mood; and some languages, like English, lexicalize or semi-lexicalize them by means of modal verbs ('may', 'must', etc), modal adjectives ('possible', etc), modal adverbs ('possibly', etc) and modal particles ('perhaps', etc). (Lyons 1981: 238)

³⁶ Footnote 5, p.20

so intently, so respectfully, to her ignorant raving was to reach over the table and whack her across the mouth. (AP: 240)

44) *But in the three extra killings he had been confronted by something impossible to regularize, even for him. Being told it was horrible enough, but only by retelling it had he understood how horrible. One plus three. Four. And the instrument of this unblinding is Merry. The daughter has made her father see. And perhaps this was all she had ever wanted to do. (AP: 418)*

In the two excerpts above, *perhaps* performs the function of expressing again a low degree of confidence on the part of the speaker; the Swede has never managed to figure out how his daughter has come to hate everything he loved and cherished. *Perhaps* is used to reflect on the way he could have done things, but the semantics of *perhaps*, together with the contextual circumstances of the novel makes us read it as ‘I could have done that, but that isn’t me, and even if I was given the chance to repair that, my behaviour would have been the same’.

The play between knowing and not knowing is one indicator among many of the larger tensions present in the novel. Indeed, such background forces impel the drama along. In the interplay between Merry’s critiques and her father’s actions... (Sigrist-Sutton 2010: 53)

And this ‘interplay’ between the Swede and Merry is one where each other’s perspectives are incomprehensible for the other, where the Swede’s assumptions are weak and have low probability. *Perhaps* is then used as a perfect epistemic form to reflect the lack of confidence and insecurity of particularly the Swede visavi his daughter’s view of the world.

Another adverb expressing the same semantic function is the epistemic adverb *maybe*, which refers to the same situation we encountered earlier, where Zuckerman tries to figure out where the Swede’s innocent smile and happiness comes from. *Maybe* in the next passage reveals Zuckerman’s belief that completely happy people are not that common and that he leaves a certain degree of possibility to his proposition.

45) *Or maybe he was just a happy man. Happy people exist too. Why shouldn’t they? All the scattershot speculation about the Swede’s motives was only my professional impatience, my trying to imbue Swede Levov with something like the tendentious meaning Tolstoy assigned to Ivan Ilych, so belittled by the author in the uncharitable story in which he sets out to heartlessly expose, in clinical terms, what it is to be ordinary. (AP: 30)*

In the 45) *maybe* is a linguistic element which helps us see how Roth, through his narrator, manages to present the Swede's story without ever completing it or even giving any answers. *Maybe* points to the narrator's lack of confidence of right and wrong and that probably there is not right or wrong at all, as we are bound to fail in finding it out anyway.

The power of American Pastoral [...] lies in the fact that the project of defining the ethnic self [...] is never completely finalized. It is an ongoing project, a negotiation of possibilities... (Royal 2011: 57)

This 'negotiation of possibilities' is efficiently enabled by the use of the epistemic *maybe*, making us wonder what is left unrevealed.

46) *The fact remains that getting people right is not what living is all about anyway. It's getting them wrong that is living [...] That's how we know we're alive: we're wrong. Maybe the best thing would be to forget being right or wrong about people and just go along for the ride. But if you can do that—well, lucky you. (AP: 35)*

Maybe can also be regarded as an urge to compromise about the American ideology and democratic idealism and their historical disruptions, because, even if Roth tries to critique the American nationalist myths in the novel, he also exposes the difficulties of abandoning them. 'Forgetting about being right or wrong' would be a consensus of allowing the Swede, and thus the all-American hero, maintain the mythic idea of a nation who still offers the powerful cultural symbols of identity and solidity. Epistemic adverbs in the novel reveal the middle way between ambiguity and no need for certainty at all.

3.5 Thinking, believing and knowing: interchange of characters' stances

One the most enduring philosophical preoccupations is the distinction between knowledge and true belief, if there is one at all from an epistemological or psychological point of view. We do not need to elucidate this issue, though, in order to determine at least some of the situations when the verbs *know* and *believe* are suitable to use. Verbs such as *doubt*, *think* and *imagine* are commonly considered to express propositional attitudes. Also, verbs such as *believe* and *think* are noncommittal in nature, which means that they are not concerned with the factuality of the proposition and are largely concerned with the speaker's own perceptions of the realities.

It is where the notion of representation comes in. “Representation is the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events.” (Cobley 2004: 192)

Characters’ representation of their realities is indeed reflected in the language they make use of in the novel; we will narrow our investigation to three typical verbs of cognitive attitude and investigate their perspectives and perceptions of the novel’s world.

Most research on the verbs of cognitive attitude has focused on the verbs *think*, *know* and *believe* being accompanied by first-person subject. However, we also look at some instances when *think*, *know* and *believe* are used with second- and third-person subjects, and argue that they encode not so much knowledge of the world and people they refer to in the propositions, but that they are rather evidentials, which are not intended to assert the truth about the states of affairs, but that they represent the characters’ tools to assess their environment and express their beliefs and outlooks about the world, and also about the relationships between characters in the novel. In our study we will consider the use of *think*, *know* and *believe* as evidential information which reflects the knowledge available to the speaker in reference to another subject of the proposition. We regard these verbs as responsive to interactional requirements of the text, but also their social contexts within which speakers and addressees interrelate.

Our main hypothesis when investigating the use of verbs of cognitive attitude is that they reflect the complex relationship between speaker and recipient(s). They also serve as basis for the reflective attitudes and beliefs present in the novel and shared by the main characters, which helps us get insights into the social and cultural environments they share and which are the cultural and social framework of the novel. By investigating these verbs also with second- and third-person subjects we are able to observe how various attitudinal interactions in the discourse provide us with different perspectives of the social and historical realities portrayed in the novel.

All human beings have the same cognitive system, and the same physical possibilities and this fact constrains the needs they have, including the way in which they relate to the world and the way they cognize this experience. (Cappelli 2007: 89)

This approach to human cognition and its expression through certain linguistic forms is what makes us believe that there is a universal perception of the same experience and that different subjects, by communicating the specificities of that experience, can relate to that experience based on their shared knowledge. However, as is the case with epistemic modals, these verbs are fairly problematic, as they seem to be susceptible to the same ambiguities and polysemy to which common lexical items are. It is thus, yet again, the contextual circumstances that we will rely on in their epistemic interpretation.

More recently, there has been a shift of attention from the individual speaker towards a more dialogic approach to stance, and towards the social formation of meaning. Fox and Clifford (1991) suggest that evidentiality is used by speakers in order to create their authority to make certain claims in certain social interactions. They offer examples of how the evidential marking does not communicate in an unassuming way to the speaker's attitude towards the trustworthiness or confidence of the proposition, but rather reacts to the social context. Even though *I know* in 47) seems to have a non-modal use, it does somehow reflect Jerry's reaction to the social context, which is the Swede's belief in compromise as indispensable for success and which he exceedingly derides, and also Jerry's own representation of his realities, but also Zuckerman's own assumptions about the opposite attitudes to life of the two brothers.

47) "*Don't talk to me about compromise! I know nothing of compromise!*"
Now in that face was the obstinacy of a lifetime of smashing the ball back at the other guy's gullet. I could imagine that Jerry had made himself important to people by means different from his brother's. (AP: 60)

We come recurrently across Jerry's voice throughout the novel; it is a rather critical voice directed at his brother and all the things that Jerry believes the Swede did wrong. Compromise is a characteristic trait of the Swede; he embraces compromise as a facilitator to a harmonious life, a view not shared by his brother. Or as Safer declares, "The comedy in Jerry's monologues is as great as that in his father's monologues. Both Jerry and Lou Levov are comic figures because of their uncompromising views and their ranting." (2006: 90) 'I know nothing of compromise' reflects Jerry's mental approach to his life experiences, and it

also serves the function of communicating Roth's sentimentality when, by contrast, is describing his protagonist as a conservative, wise all-American champion as opposed to Jerry's 'ranting'.

The uses of *know* occur when the speaker is making a strong commitment to his/her proposition. The speaker uses *know* in order to claim that his belief in the truth of the proposition is well-grounded "and in his judgment at least unassailable, and by virtue of this fact, which he should be able to substantiate, if called upon to do so, by providing the evidence, he has the right to assert" whatever he regards as a well-deemed statement about the reality he/she refers to.³⁷ (Lyons 1977: 794)

And so, we get somewhat swayed by Merry's enraged statements when she accuses her father of complete lack of interest and concern for the war.

48) *"My responsibility is to you and not to the war." "Oh, I know your responsibility is not to the war—that's why I have to go to New York, B-b-because people there do feel responsible. They feel responsible when America b-blow up Vietnamese villages. (AP: 107)*

The use of *I know* in 48) is meant to reflect the Swede's belief that his obligations lie in taking care of his family first and foremost, which Merry considers reprehensible and worth fighting against: individual responsibility prevailing over the national one is highly criticized by the sixties radicals. *I know* is also meant to point to how vividly she is aware of her father's beliefs, that they represent knowledge made clearly available to her and whose obtainability determines her high degree of confidence in that knowledge. Moreover, *know* entails Merry's highest certainty in the truth of her statements, which she can identify based on the evidence that she assembles from her personal experience and from her interaction with the outside world.

Further, *think* can be interpreted both qualificationally and non-qualificationally. Because of its semantic generality and that it encodes the most fundamental human activity, cognition,

³⁷ In a dynamic theory of meaning, such as the theory of lexical complexity, *know* is taken to represent the extreme pole of the epistemic-evidential scales, and which can be opposite to both *think* and *believe*. However, "since these verbs lexicalize a complex interplay of gradable semantic dimensions, by changing the dimension that is foregrounded or backgrounded in the process of meaning construal, new oppositions are created. In principle, therefore, it would be possible to oppose *know* to all, or at least most of the other verbs." (Cappelli 2007: 194)

think can cover an amazingly great number of contexts. It is, therefore, a matter of contextualized interpretation whenever we deal with it. And so, *think* as qualificational indicates the cognitive activity of thinking, and as non-qualificational it refers to a valuation process leading to an assessment of the epistemic status of a state of affairs. However, it is not easy to make a clear distinction between the two, given the nearness of the act of thinking to the evaluative process, and given that *think* involves both dimensions in one single lexical item, it possibly represents the most problematic verb to examine.³⁸ (Cappelli 2007: 178-179)

One of the fundamental aspects of the novel's critique of the sixties activism is its focus on the violence adopted by Merry and, consequently, by all sixties radicals.

They did not believe that extreme actions are a rather dramatic way of changing the order of things. Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue. (Isseman&Kazin 2000: 214)

Beside the fact that *I think* in both 49) and 50) reflect the verb's great flexibility and adaptability to the complex contextual microsystem, it also reflects Merry's opposing beliefs to the Swede.³⁹

49) *You call that extreme? No, I think extreme is to continue on with life as usual when this kind of craziness is going on, when people are b-being exploited left, right, and center, and you can just go on and get into your suit and tie every day and go to work. As if nothing is happening. That is extreme. (AP: 111)*

50) *I don't want to be understood—I want to be f-f-f-free!” “Would you like it better if I were a senseless parent trying not to understand you? “I would! I think I would!” (AP: 107)*

Besides, in 50) *I think* is construed so as to foreground a mental scenario based on already formed opinions about a hypothetical situation; Merry is able to think about a situation where

³⁸ A lot has been said about *think*: it has been subject of philosophical research, along with *believe* and *know*, and of linguistic studies by scholars belonging to the various traditions of research ranging from formal semantics to pragmatics, from functionalist studies to investigations of language change. Besides, there are many studies relative to the grammaticalization of this verb: Traugott (1989) and Kärkkäinen (2003) suggest that *I think* operates as a discourse marker in numerous contexts, and that it is increasingly assuming a more clearly defined epistemic meaning, as a result of its continuing process of subjectification.

³⁹ The extensive use of *think* leads to the conclusion that 'thinking', in the sense of the Cartesian *cogito*, is for human beings probably the most important activity, to the degree that we 'metaphorically' identify ourselves with our thoughts. Thinking makes us conscious of ourselves and, as a result, our thoughts come to represent our beliefs, intensions and expectations. (Cappelli 2007: 179)

the Swede would not be the caring and understanding father he is, which could also indicate the fact that she had thought about it before her father asked that question, as she is asked by the Swede to imagine a possible state of affairs and to evaluate all possible implications. Another illustration of *I think* adapting its dimensions to contextual pressures is its use in 51). *I think* here can be construed as the Swede's indication that what follows is simply his personal opinion and that as such he leaves the hearer/Merry a way out in case she does not want to comply with his appeal. The verb in 51) is used in a form which is ordinarily connected with non-qualificational construal, but it acts as a hedge that introduces a request, particularly in the first sentence. 'Merry, may I tell you what *I think*?' is actually meant to express a noncommittal statement, an opening for her to offer an alternative account of the state of affairs or simply deny it (something he subconsciously desires).

51) "*Merry, may I tell you what I think? I think you are terrified of being punished for what you've done. I think that rather than evade your punishment you have taken it into your own hands. I don't believe that's a difficult conclusion to reach, honey. I don't believe I'm the only person in the world who, seeing you here, seeing you here looking like this, would come up with that idea.* (AP: 249)

Moreover, whereas *believe* and *know* lexicalize a higher degree of subject's commitment to the evaluation, most likely consequential of the evidential element they implicate, *think* does not appear to be as rigorous in this sense and in fact it is open to numerous degrees of ambiguity according to different contextual components. The interpretation of *think* then depends largely on whether the context does or does not make direct references to the reasons of the evaluator's attitude.

In 51) *think* essentially indicates the Swede's subjective judgement and opinion; however, we cannot disregard the possibility that *think* can also be interpreted as evidential-based, as the knowledge it makes reference to is present as available knowledge shared by both the reader and characters in the novel as a whole. This evidence is based on the shakiness of Merry's convictions and political and social understanding, particularly when we read about her

complete transformation when the Swede meets her again as a Jain.⁴⁰ We cannot help but be indignant and frustrated by the ridiculousness of her new situation, which basically makes us adopt the same attitude the Swede expresses with the help of *I think*. Besides, the way the verb is used here reflects the Swede's attempt to make his statements even stronger by allowing him to make Merry listen to him, without appearing too aggressive. In other words, *I think* in 51) marks the resilient presence of the subject/the Swede in the communicative process.

As far as the use of *believe* goes, it is similarly used to express the Swede's personal estimation in relation to the state of affairs in a very dedicated way. The degree of likelihood is not as well defined as is the case of the statements qualified by *know*, but it is still clear that it is allocated an affirmative significance on the epistemic scale. In some contexts, in order to underline the subjectivity of the utterance, the speaker can use *believe* instead of *know* in order to mark his epistemic view and position his stance in the domain of uncertainty, as is the case in 51).

Mental state predicates in their qualificational reading tend to occur in antagonistic contexts. (Nuyts 2000) As we can notice, our contexts reveal contrastive views between the speaker and the hearer; in such contexts, what is opposed is in fact the interlocutor's epistemic-evidential evaluation and the evaluator's own appraisal and the inferences that can result from it. The epistemic-evidential evaluation in our contexts pertains to both the speaker and our knowledge as hearers/readers who are familiar with the text as a whole.

52) *I don't know what's happened. Who is she? Where did she come from? I cannot control her. I cannot recognize her. I thought she was smart. She's not smart at all. She's become stupid, Seymour; she gets more and more stupid each time we talk.* (AP: 102)

One of the most significant disputes of the novel, which indeed represents the underlying subject matter of the novel, uncovered by the verbs of cognitive attitude, is the discrepancy

⁴⁰ Five years after the bombing of the Old Rimrock post office, the Swede finally finds Merry, but he can barely recognize her. She has abandoned the life of a violent revolutionary and embraced Jainism, an atheistic Indian philosophy whose practitioners advocate the ethical principle of nonviolence. Living in filth, Merry now fears hurting anyone or anything; she does not bathe so that she does "no harm to the water," and she wears a dirty improvised veil in order "to do no harm to the microscopic organisms." (AP: 232)

between the beliefs and ideology of the Swede (and his wife) on the one hand, and their daughter's ideology on the other. The semantic dimension that transpires from our examples appears to be that of a cognitive evaluative process, which yields the outlook of the evaluator on the basis of the available evidence.

Another aspect of these verbs worth investigating is the way they reflect the complex relationships between characters in the novel. We have, therefore, attempted to explore the verbs of cognitive attitude *think*, *know* and *believe* with second- and third- person subjects; this allowed us to observe how various attitudinal interactions in the discourse provide us with different perspectives on the social and historical realities portrayed in the novel.

The use of *know* in example 53) has a double purpose: it reflects both Jerry's and the Swede's estimation that the Swede does not know what he is; by employing it in an interrogative sentence, *know* can be interpreted as Jerry's own assessment of his brother's poor inner insight, but also the insinuation of the Swede's lack of such assessment.

53) *"What are you? Do you know? What you are is you're always trying to smooth everything over [...] What you are is never telling the truth if you think it's going to hurt somebody's feelings [...] The boy who never breaks the code. Whatever society dictates, you do. Decorum. (AP: 274)*

For the reader who is familiar with the novel, it is easy to recognize in the use of *know* an assumption based on the association with the knowledge operated by both the narrator and audience with reference to the Swede's all prevailing social compliance. *Think* discloses one of the Swede's essential qualities, which is conformity to the norms, constantly doing what others expect of him. We can argue that *think* here has an epistemic reading, as it is conjectural in nature and reflects his opinion about the way people see and expect his behaviour to be. We can notice the same meanings communicated in example 54), which again are statements made by Jerry when talking to Zuckerman, the narrator.

54) *Because nothing is in harmony with the world as he knows it? Thinks he knows it. (AP: 146)*

One thing we are able to remark about the use of *think* and *know* in both 53) and 54) is the fact that Jerry passes judgments about the Swede in a way that his viewpoint does not recognize any other alternative perspectives. This is most likely a linguistic strategy used by

Roth through his narrator to make a point about the Swede's likability and conformity trumping his happiness, and prioritizing what others never do, which is considered shared knowledge, hence Jerry's confidence in his utterances. However, we admit that the epistemic reading of both *think* and *know* in 54) is a stretch, but we believe that it is not an impossible interpretation, especially when one is familiar with the text.

Moreover, *think* has a very wide-ranging meaning, and according to the context, it can be construed as a judgement over accessible evidence or as a personal belief. The strength of the evaluation then is determined by the context. "*Think* is therefore a purely epistemic verb, which can either be interpreted as 'in my personal opinion' or 'maybe'." (Cappelli 2007: 185) We can then construe *think* in 54) as 'maybe', which would reflect Jerry's very low degree of confidence and that he actually believes the opposite of what his utterance communicates literally.

We have reason to believe that Zuckerman esteems the Swede's conformity as shared knowledge in the novel when using the same verbs of cognitive attitude through the voice of his daughter Merry:

55) "*But the one who doesn't think for himself is you!*" she'd told him when he'd suggested that she might be parroting the clichés of others. "*You're the living example of the person who never thinks for himself!*" "*Am I really?*" he said, laughing. "*Yes! You're the most conformist man I ever met! All you do is what's expec-expec-expected of you!*" (AP: 241)

We can undoubtedly read the use of *think* in 55) as 'having an opinion of your own', but it also reflects the ability of thinking about the world and be cognizant about it, thus 'having a personal opinion' after getting involved in the process of interpreting the world according to available knowledge and my mental abilities. *Think* is used as a strategic device to involve the readers in the joint construction of a mental representation of both the Swede's and the knowledge available to others interacting in the discourse about him.

Jewish identity and cultural assimilation are paramount themes marking the reading of the novel.

Zuckerman imagines post-World War II American identity as grounded in a coherent, autonomous self; and he believes that achieving such an ideal American identity demands the

eradication of a Jewish past – or any ethnic past – that suggests difference. The Swede embraces the symbols of an American universalism without fully realizing that he is in fact embracing not a universal but a particular form of gentile identity. (Stanely 2005: 7)

56) *Where was the Jew in him? You couldn't find it and yet you knew it was there. Where was the irrationality in him? Where was the crybaby in him? Where were the wayward temptations? No guile. No artifice. No mischief. All that he had eliminated to achieve his perfection. (AP: 20)*

By employing the verb *knew* here Zuckerman tries to insinuate the impossibility of a complete eradication of one's ethnic self and that the Swede never managed to remove completely his Jewish identity in order to create the perfect American cultural assimilation model. *Knew* is an evidential and also a reference to the shared cognitive representation of the Swede's identity in the novel's world. What we see in the novel is that the Swede, just like his father, believes in success, in business and home life as the fundamental emblems of an American identity.

Believe in 57) reflects the credo that by being perfect in his business at the glove factory, he will be able to prevent anything wrong from happening to him or his family. Besides, *believe* is a non-factive verb, used here to mark the character's subjectivity.

57) *He could not prevent anything. He never could, though only now did he look prepared to believe that manufacturing a superb ladies' dress glove in quarter sizes did not guarantee the making of a life that would fit to perfection everyone he loved. Far from it. You think you can protect a family and you cannot protect even yourself. (AP: 421)*

By looking at *believe*, *think* and *know* used with other than first-person subjects in our discourse, we are able to uncover distinctive ways of looking at the same linguistic phenomenon from a different angle. They are examples of vague language and serve Roth's purpose of making us doubt and believe at the same time the validity of the propositions made by different characters in the novel. Besides, these verbs are very efficient linguistic tools to allow the formation of a particular common ground that the readers and the narrator share based on inferred argumentation.

Essentially, the use of verbs of cognitive attitude in *American Pastoral* in some of the quoted examples reflect direct personal experience, hence they can be regarded as exposing very reliable evidence. In other cases, though, they qualify states of affairs which cannot be objectively verified, but for which there is evidence trustworthy for the evaluator and presumably for the reader as well. One can also observe that unlike epistemic modal verbs, which have largely a direct reference to the Swede, *I think*, *I know* and *I believe* indicate the mental and cognitive states of other characters in the novel as well, such as the Swede's brother Jerry, his wife Dawn and his daughter Merry.

American Pastoral has its main focus on the Swede's idyllic life, which embodies all the symbols representative of the attainment of the American dream; it is also the story of the tragic losses the Swede suffers during the sixties riots taking place in the years following World War II. It has an even greater impact on him because his own daughter is involved in the sixties radicalism; he is directly defied and confronted with the faults of his beliefs and liberal ideas about America and its capitalism. By examining the use of verbs of cognitive attitude used by characters in the novel, we get access to their personal and social consciousness; it allows us to identify their beliefs and ideologies, most of them being highly committed to the likelihood of the state of affairs they make references to, others having a lower degree of commitment and urging us to take perspective based on our own inferential resources.

3.6 Interplay of attitudinal evaluations in *American Pastoral*

We have determined by now that *American Pastoral* deals largely with two types of social consciousness, two types of generational ideologies and two opposing views on conformity, responsibility and happiness of the individual. Any new ideology and social change can generally be seen as a reaction to the old one; this rebellion against everything old and traditional leaves also traces in Roth's novel. However, the language used by Merry as representative of the dissenting new way of life in America, even though very aggressive and powerful, only leaves us with the feeling of wonder. And it is probably Philip Roth's intention all along; the language used by his two main characters in *American Pastoral*, who are championing the typical American idealism on the one hand and the activists of the

sixties which derogate it entirely on the other hand, is emotionally charged and meant to stir reactions from the readers. We believe then that an extra valuable part of our analysis should be to focus on the types of emotions these two main characters use in presenting and defending their ideologies and interpretations of life; as we mentioned earlier in the study, we rarely make evaluations of our realities without assigning feelings to them.

We will therefore have a brief look at the evaluative significance of the language in a few chunks of texts in this section. We expect to find an interplay of positive and negative feelings shared by the Swede and his daughter Merry, the positive ones pertaining largely to the Swede and the negative ones to the defiant daughter; we are able to see the interplay of attitudinal standpoints especially because parts of the novel have a dialogic and interactive structure in which they share sets of values and attitudes. Moreover, we feel compelled to mention that Roth, by employing specific evaluative linguistic means to describe the Swede's emotional world, manages to make the readers align themselves with his position and embrace his feelings towards his daughter, but also to his American life.

Meredith 'Merry' Levov is introduced in the novel as the "Rimrock Bomber" (AP: 68), who in 1968 blows up the post office in Old Rimrock, accidentally killing the town doctor. As an intelligent child, Merry exhibits a stubborn streak and grows into a heavy, defiant teenager, the "ugliest daughter ever born of two attractive parents." (AP: 243) The expectations placed on Merry to be a good girl reveal the kind of social limits on young girls of her era to be reserved, both in demeanor and in speech. The alleged perfectionism, social pressures and expectations are the causes of Merry's rage, being utterly irritated by her father's perseverance to keep up with the perfect image of a national hero.

The Swede, being a strict conformist, "the one with the ultimate decorum" (AP: 274), is also accused by his brother Jerry (as we could see earlier in the study) of doing everything for the sake of appearances, even to the point of loving his daughter and wife as mere symbols of his cultural absorption into the American dream. Zuckerman is keen to understand the Swede and his American Jewishness because his aim is, through the Swede, to understand himself. Roth allows his protagonist to show us the easiness with which he managed to get immersed in mainstream American culture; by allowing the Swede to reimagine his self and his

identity, Roth offers us a defensible perspective of his American identity, largely due to the nostalgic tone in the way Roth describes the Swede's successful assimilation.

In order to convey the two kinds of viewpoints Merry and the Swede have of the world in general and American life in particular, Roth uses specific emotional language to give an overall impression of the positive and negative emotions associated with the questions the novel is concerned with.

58) *Hate America? Why, he lived in America the way he lived inside his own skin. All the pleasures of his younger years were American pleasures, all that success and happiness had been American, and he need no longer keep his mouth shut about it just to defuse her ignorant hatred. The loneliness he would feel as a man without all his American feelings. The longing he would feel if he had to live in another country. Yes, everything that gave meaning to his accomplishments had been American. Everything he loved was here. (AP: 213)*

The Swede's positive emotions about his American life and identity are those of *success* and *happiness*, *pleasures* and *love*. Without his American feelings he loses his essence, loneliness being the desolate feeling he gets when thinking about a life without everything American. Affect is a sub-division of the system of attitude within appraisal theory and it is concerned with the surfacing of emotions as a result of responses to environments. The ideal environment for the Swede is American capitalism and idealism; this environment produces only positive emotions for the Swede.

Merry's hatred and violence, on the other hand, are as intense as the Swede's good will and pastoral serenity. Her aversion for her family and country is as fierce as her father's affection for the nation that was created on a dream.

59) *For her, being an American was loathing America, but loving America was something he could not let go of any more than he could have let go of loving his father and his mother, any more than he could have let go of his decency. How could she "hate" this country when she had no conception of this country? How could a child of his be so blind as to revile the "rotten system" that had given her own family every opportunity to succeed? (AP: 213)*

To *revile*, *hate* and *loathe* indicate the negative emotional response to the same earlier mentioned environment, which is the long-standing American democracy; her critical rage

and negative emotions indicate an opposite pole of attitudes from her father's. However, we cannot help feeling that her rejection of all comforts of her family is just a manifestation of a naïve young mind in search of a higher cause to create meaning. Frequently, the activists' highly personal histories, like Merry's irritation at home and her failure to control her stuttering, were part of their motivation to manifest rage. Many of the young people like Merry mistrusted the meaningless war the country was fighting, and some—like Merry—killed innocent people such as those whose lives ended with Merry's four bombs.

60) *The truth was that he had known all along: without a tempter's assistance, everything angry inside her had broken into the open. She was unintimidated, she was unintimidatable, this child who had written for her teacher not, like the other kids, that life was a beautiful gift and a great opportunity and a noble endeavor and a blessing from God but that it was just a short period of time in which you were alive. Yes, the intention had been all her own. That had to be. Her antagonism had been intent on murder and nothing less. Otherwise this mad repose would not be the result. He tried to let reason rise once again to the surface. How hard he tried. What does a reasonable man say next? If, after being battered and once again brought nearly to tears by what he'd just heard uttered so matter-of-factly—everything incredible uttered so matter-of-factly—a man could hold on and be reasonable, what does he go ahead to say? What does a reasonable, responsible father say if he is able still to feel intact as a father? (AP: 248)*

The emotional language in 60) is largely charged with the warlike tensions in the text; it also reflects Merry's wartime psychological assertiveness. She becomes a politically perilous voice of the sixties, whose *unintimidated* and *unintimidatable* behaviour reflects a forthright determination to do whatever it takes in order to live up to the ideology she so strongly defends. The *angry* and *mad antagonism* is illustrative of the radicalism many youths of the sixties resorted to in order to manifest their political and social dissent.

At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that at this point in the narrative, the representation of Merry the novel gives up is contingent on her father's judgment of her. As Zuckerman's view regresses, Merry's place in the narrative becomes progressively consumed by the Swede's own interpretation of her motives.

61) *The daughter who transports him out of the longed-for American pastoral and into everything that is its antithesis and its enemy, into the fury, the violence, and the desperation of the counterpastoral—into the indigenous American berserk, (AP: 86)*

The *fury*, the *violence*, and the *desperation* are emotions belonging to the Swede, but they represent responses to Merry's aggression against American empire's reputable, law-abiding citizenry. In 62) the Swede tries to rescue Merry from blame by describing her as confused and mentioning her very young age.

62) *She was a wonderful child. She was only a child, and she got herself in with the wrong people. She could never have masterminded anything like that on her own. She just hated the war. We all did. We all felt angry and impotent. But she was a kid, a confused adolescent, a high-strung girl. She was too young to have had any real experience, and she got herself caught up in something that she did not understand. She was attempting to save lives. I'm not trying to give a political excuse for her, because there is no political excuse—there is no justification, none. But you can't just look at the appalling effect of what she did. She had her reasons, which were very strong for her, and the reasons don't matter now—she has changed her philosophy and the war is over. None of us really know all that happened and none of us can really know why. There is more behind it, much, much more than we can understand. She was wrong, of course—she made a tragic, terrible, ghastly mistake. (AP: 416)*

By pointing out that 'we all felt *angry and impotent*' he is trying to make her into a victim lost to the voices of dissension. However, he does not 'save' her entirely, as the language shows us. *Appalling, tragic, terrible, ghastly* are the emotional effects of her actions, actions that had the purpose of disrupting the Swede's own feelings about his own world and implicate the wrongness of his indiscriminating loyalty to the American dream.

Roth also tries to look into the reasons and initial causes of Merry's later radicalism; he recalls how enthralled she seemed the first time she saw a monk set himself on fire to demonstrate against the war in Vietnam on television. We see how the language reveals the evolution of her feelings and how the intensity with which she returned to the news on TV triggered opposite feelings in the Swede; while Merry became less *appalled* and *horrified*, and more *excited* and *curious*, it was beginning to *unsettle* and *frighten* the Swede.

63) *They did not know how to stop her. What was she doing by watching and watching as though she intended never to stop watching? He wanted her to be not upset, but not to be not upset like this. Was she simply trying to make sense of it? To master her fear of it? Was she trying to figure out what it was like to be able to do something like that to yourself? Was she imagining herself as one of those monks? Was she watching because she was still appalled or was she watching now because she was excited? What was starting to unsettle him, to frighten him, was the idea that*

Merry was less horrified now than curious, and soon he himself became obsessed, though not, like her, by the self-immolators in Vietnam but by the change of demeanor in his eleven-year-old. That she'd always wanted to know things had made him tremendously proud of her from the time she was small, but did he really want her to want to know so much about something like this? (AP: 155)

Anti-Vietnam war activists such as Merry were enjoying being boisterous and were validating their actions by finding moral reasons to do what they did, especially by having role model activists. And even though the acts of the monks Merry liked to watch on TV were pointless and malicious, they were serving as excuses for violent rebels like her.

The bomb can also be interpreted as the explosive entrance of history into the Swede's family and life. His emotional reactions to what had befallen him reveals the devastating effect it had on him, it subverted his worldview and the world as he knew it collapsed.

64) *They got him. The bomb might as well have gone off in their living room. The violence done to his life was awful. Horrible. (AP: 69)*

65) *That is the outer life. To the best of his ability, it is conducted just as it used to be. But now it is accompanied by an inner life, a gruesome inner life of tyrannical obsessions, stifled inclinations, superstitious expectations, horrible imaginings, fantasy conversations, unanswerable questions. (AP: 173)*

Awful, horrible, gruesome are meant to describe his feelings after the bombing; there is almost no trace of the good feelings assigned to him in the beginning of the novel.

Disillusionment has replaced the Swede's pastoral idyll and everything it had appealing about the American myth of happiness. Happiness becomes something forced now, *artificial* and *never spontaneous again*.

66) *He had learned the worst lesson that life can teach—that it makes no sense. And when that happens the happiness is never spontaneous again. It is artificial and, even then, bought at the price of an obstinate estrangement from oneself and one's history. (AP: 81)*

The sadness of the language describing the Swede as a stranger to himself and his history has a profound effect on the reader; it also enforces our sympathy with the Swede we kept throughout the novel, which again shows how skillfully Philip Roth manages to make us have faith in the validity of the American dream.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Research results and discussion

The aim of this thesis was to carry out an empirically driven interdisciplinary study which combines analyses of epistemic modality, epistemic stance and appraisal in the novel *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth. It had as a primary purpose to explore the relation between the novel's epistemic expressions on the one hand and its characters' values and perspectives on the other hand. We managed to examine this relation by looking closely at particular passages in the text (as this was the most appropriate for an analysis such as ours) which exhibited epistemic verbs, epistemic adverbs, verbs of cognitive attitude and representative lexical items for the analysis of emotions.

In Chapter 2, we explored the definition and types of modality with the focus on epistemic modality and epistemic stance. We determined that epistemic modality deals primarily with the notions of possibility and necessity, and that it represents the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition. We also looked at previous research which suggests that subjectivity is part of epistemic modality, and that the latter actually reflects the speaker's subjective observations about the world. In addition, another essential aspect of epistemic modality is evidentiality, which encodes the source of the speaker's knowledge. As there is no conclusive research on evidentiality in the literature and no clear differentiation between the description of the source of knowledge and the depiction of the speaker's attitude towards knowledge and its source, we examined evidentiality as an intrinsic part of epistemicity.

Furthermore, in section 2.1 we focused on the epistemic modal verbs and adverbs and indicated how previous studies tried to show their semantic and pragmatic features in the discourse. We referred to Palmer (1986), who regards epistemic modality as evidential-like and who believes that subjectivity is not only a feature of epistemic modality, but a defining one; we also investigated Lyons' view on subjectivity (1977; 1995), whose view is in fact the point of reference in many modality studies; he considers subjectivity to reflect the speaker's social and relational roles. We adopted both these views and consider subjectivity to be an intrinsic part of epistemicity.

In section 2.2 we investigated previous studies that deal with verbs of cognitive attitude. Most studies of these verbs come from those on epistemic modality and are concerned with people's understanding, beliefs and knowledge of the world. We focused principally on Cappelli's (2007) research on this set of verbs, but also on other studies where these verbs are called 'epistemic verbal phrases' (Wierzbicka 2006), stancetaking (Englebretson 2007), or stance triangle (Du Bois 2007). No matter the term for this category of verbs, we determined that they all express the human mind's ability to contemplate its realities and form beliefs about the world based on available knowledge and information; being part of the human cognition, these verbs reflect the lexicalized mental representation of the mind's cognitive attitude and the subsequent cognitive activity.

In section 2.3 we tried to indicate how linguistic analysis can help us interpret the meanings and values communicated in a novel. As language is primarily the product of a social, historical and cultural context, it is bound to reflect the specificities of that context. Besides, the way we organize and use our language conveys humans' cognitive abilities on the one hand and their communicative purposes on the other. Besides, another crucial aspect we considered when investigating epistemic modality in the novel was the representational process of the mind, since epistemic modality is an exciting tool of analyzing and interpreting the speakers'/characters' belief-sets and comprehension of the world.

In the section 2.4 we tried to show the significance of a cognitive-pragmatic approach to discourse analysis, as the novel can be regarded as a shared environment among its characters, which exposes the knowledge and interpretation of their circumstances, so that the linguistic expressions communicate the characters' mental representations of their realities to each other. As these verbs reflect the process of human cognition, they indicate the characters' cognitive framework; besides, the pragmatic approach is meant to help us uncover the function that epistemic language plays in the context of the characters' behavior and allows us to observe the relation between their behavior and the perceptions they have of the world they share. Besides, we established the association between shared environment and intersubjectivity of utterances that involve verbs of cognitive attitude.

In section 2.5 we took a brief look at appraisal theory, as we believe it belongs in a study such as ours. Appraisal, traditionally associated with epistemic modality and evidentiality, is regionalised as three interacting domains, one of them being attitude. Part of the system of attitude is affect, which is concerned with the linguistic resources construing emotional reactions, dividing them primarily into positive or negative emotions. The relevance of characters' emotions in the novel consists in the way they are determined by the roles they are assigned, which takes us back to the similar behaviour verbs of cognitive attitude display as well.

In Chapter 3, we focused on specific chunks of texts and their language. Before getting to the novel itself, in section 3.1 we tried to briefly indicate the definition of the American dream and how it originally started as an American way of life. As we believe that all fiction is the product of a social consciousness, Reich's (1971) study of the types of American consciousness has been important in our study. The American dream is the American consciousness that believed in the prevalence of the human potential; it is the individual exploration of one's natural abilities and talents, so that all success is the result of a fair and competitive endeavour to get ahead.

In section 3.2 we tried to offer a general overview of the novel's central messages. One pervasive impression we get from the novel is Philip Roth's nostalgic view of American idealism and mythic liberalism, and his critique of the sixties activism that rebelled against all American beliefs and values held dear by what many call 'the greatest American generation'. As the novel focuses on its main character as the archetypal all-American hero, Seymour Levov, who embodies the successful realization of the American dream, it also tries to be slightly critical of the mythic image of the American idealism through other characters in the novel, especially the Swede's daughter Merry, who is part of the sixties activism and who is very blunt in her judgments of her father and his beliefs, as our analysis reveals in the subsequent sections.

In section 3.3 we focused on epistemic verbs expressing necessities and possibilities in *American Pastoral*. We found that most epistemic verbs are used by the narrator in the novel, Nathan Zuckerman, to reflect upon the way the Swede feels or felt about his life and the

events which ensued after Merry's bombing of the local post office. They are assumptions based on both information available to him through other characters in the novel, such as the Swede's brother Jerry, and speculations largely based on situation-specific knowledge. However, we tend to regard the assumptions Zuckerman makes in the novel as true representations of the Swede's beliefs about the world, as they are largely grounded on logical conclusions reached in agreement with other characters; it is based on shared knowledge and thus intersubjective in nature, which becomes even more reliable due to the closeness of these characters - his brother and daughter - to the Swede.

By examining specific occurrences of modal verbs in the novel, we found that both epistemic *must* and *should* reflect the core values of the American dream; responsibility, hard work and the endeavours to become successful no matter what are paramount for the happiness of the individual. *Must* behaves in the novel as an evidential, and it is even more so as it urges the readers to gather all available evidence from the whole novel in order to imagine and reconstitute how things developed for the Swede and the rest of the characters. Moreover, we observed that the interpretation of *must* is fundamentally based on its context, but also on the evidence implicit in the speaker's mind and made available to the reader throughout the discourse. And so, it becomes irrelevant whether *must* is an epistemic modal or an evidential, as its construal is decisive only within a specific relational context.

Furthermore, while *should* behaves like an inferential evidential, urging the readers to reach their own conclusions based on the evidence presented to them, *have to* refers to the necessities that the Swede considers significant for a successful life, like being modest and forbearing and understanding; we argued that even though it had a primarily deontic reading, it could also be construed as expressing personal necessity. The same applies for the use of *need*, whose epistemic reading is sometimes based on the Swede's internal necessities; however, we also determined that *need* does not always indicate an inner necessity, and that it sometimes indicates necessity coming from outside; it is especially relevant in some of its uses in the novel, as *need* also designates conformity as part of the Swede's character and one of the values he deems important in life.

The epistemic *can* indicates circumstantial possibility in the novel, and it refers mostly to Merry and the things that the Swede and his wife can do for her; the same is applicable for the use of *could*, which is largely used as an indicator of circumstantial possibilities, but whose use refers to the Swede and his ways of being. The uses of *could* indicate the inferential assumptions Jerry makes about his brother based on the supposed perceptions that people have of the Swede. Besides, the use of *could* versus *might* in the novel is meant to uncover Jerry's weak commitment to his propositions in the case of the latter. At the same time, both *could* and *might* are highly context-dependent and have quite similar meanings. The main distinction between the two is that *could* expresses a higher degree of probability and *might* behaves more cautiously, referring largely to the inferences that the Swede makes about the undertakings his daughter is part of. *Could* refers to the situations that are somehow relatable to his direct knowledge, *might* on the other hand is largely concerned with his pure speculations.

Furthermore, we have seen that *may* is used to communicate inferences with very low degree of probability that are in fact meant to communicate an opposite meaning, which is also employed to express a sort of wish. Similarly, *will* behaves as a judgment based on knowledge, which we assume is not only Jerry's but in fact shared among other characters in the novel. *Would* is primarily used to express a narrative past and is essentially used in connection with the way the Swede feels about America and his admiration for the American life and values. Finally, the interpretation of the epistemic verbs in all our contexts is totally dependent on what the speaker communicates as evidence available to both him/her and to the readers, who very often are urged to use their own knowledge acquired throughout the discourse so that they can make an inference.

As far as the investigation of epistemic adverbs in section 3.4 goes, it has provided us with different degrees of the speakers' commitment to their propositions; Merry uses mostly the adverb that is the extreme positive end of the epistemic scale, *certainly*, which is evocative of and consistent with her entire personality, behaviour and language throughout the novel. All her utterances communicate a high commitment to their truth, which is also meant to be Roth's critique of her naiveté and ignorance when expressing blatant views of the way things are supposed to be (and which are the opposite of her father's beliefs and life ideology).

Also, the narrator uses *probably* when making assumptions and trying to abstain from claiming knowledge; *likely* is used to express rather unpredictable and unknowable events, primarily used in connection with Merry's stuttering and behaviour, her stuttering being indeed regarded in the novel as one of the most unpredictable and upsetting episodes. There are very few instances of *possibly* in the novel, and most of the uses are co-occurrences with *can* and *could*, which consequently have the function of intensifiers of the differences of opinions and beliefs between the Swede and Merry's. *Maybe* and *perhaps* are semantic equivalents; *perhaps* expresses in the novel the Swede's low degree of confidence, which is essentially representative of the Swede whenever he makes assumptions about his daughter and the way she has come to hate everything he believes in, but it is also used to reflect on past possibilities and probabilities.

Moreover, *maybe* is a great linguistic tool employed by Roth to present the Swede's life without offering us any final answers, and also making a point that it is in vain that we look for right and wrong in a human life, that there is no right and wrong, and that ultimately there is no truth, just a subjective interpretation of it. Since the Swede's life is the prototypical successful American life, *maybe* can be read here as that there is no fault with the American idealism; *maybe* can also be regarded as an urge to a conciliation about the American national myth and democratic ideology highly impregnated in the Swede's being.

Another fascinating aspect of our study, explored in section 3.5, is the investigation of three verbs of cognitive attitude *think*, *believe* and *know*. Beside the common investigation of these verbs accompanied by *I*, we also tried to analyse them with second- and third- subjects, which was a great opportunity to see the interplay of the characters' perspectives, since the novel deals with the opposition of the Swede's belief-set, representative of the American ideology and liberalism, and Merry's credo that her father is part of a system that stifles freedom to decide your own life, a media-driven life dictated by corporations whose only goal is to seek profit no matter what.

I know is largely used to indicate Merry's knowledge of her father's belief in individual responsibility as opposed to national responsibility; it is also meant to designate the high degree of confidence in her knowledge, as we already are familiar with the highly assertive

manner in which all Merry's utterances are made in the novel as a whole. Additionally, *I think* is also used by Merry to refer to her representational capabilities and imagine hypothetical scenarios based on available evidence and knowledge about her father. *I think* is also meant to denote the opposition of beliefs and perspectives of the two main characters. Similarly, *I think* is also employed by the Swede to express subjective and personal opinions, but it can also be construed as an evidential when used in the context of Merry's political convictions and her subsequent conduct. Finally, *I believe* is used to communicate the Swede's personal assessment in a very committed way.

Furthermore, after investigating these verbs of cognitive attitude with second- and third-subjects, we were able to identify the main characters' cognitive attitudes, beliefs and perspectives about their world, but mostly about other characters in the novel. *Know* is used by Jerry to suggest that the Swede has very poor inner insight and real self-identity; *think* exposes one of the traits that describes the Swede, which is conformity to the norms and always complying with what is asked of him. Both *know* and *think* are used by Jerry to make high committed propositions about his brother, indicating the intersubjective nature of his knowledge.

In addition, Merry makes the same kind of utterances about the Swede's conformism by using *think* with both the meaning of having an opinion of his own, but also of pondering over the things that happen around him and discern their existence from his own. *Knew* is used by Zuckerman to refer to the Swede's Jewish identity and how it still was there for everyone to see, regardless of his successful ethnic assimilation into the American mainstream; it can be construed as an evidential and a reference to the Jewish identity present as shared knowledge in the novel. *Believe* reflects the Swede's spirit of a businessman and his credo in family business as an indispensable part of a successful life. Finally, the investigation of these verbs helped us get insights into the characters' perspectives, identify their beliefs and ideologies and distinguish the sources and degrees of their commitments.

In the last section of our paper, 3.6, we had a brief look at the emotional world of our two main characters: the Swede and Merry. Much of the emotional interplay between the two boils down to two opposing types of emotions referring to the same phenomenon: American democracy and idealism. While the Swede feels *love*, *pleasure* and *happiness* for his

America, Merry feels *loathing*, *anger* and *antagonism*. However, we are able to see a shift in the Swede's emotional world after Merry's bombing: *estrangement from oneself* and *gruesome inner life* settle in. The emotionally charged language employed in many sections of the novel, revealing two generational attitudes towards the American way of life tends to make us embrace the Swede's serenity and belief in hard work, discipline and dutifulness. Words like *awful*, *horrible* and *gruesome* are only some instances of linguistic means used by Roth to make a point about the unnecessary violence carried out by a young generation of people who never really had an accurate understanding of their realities.

4.2 Limitations and questions for further research

Since this is primarily a linguistic study, I have not been able to explore in more detail the historical and cultural messages of *American Pastoral*. It has also been rather difficult to look at the novel as whole, since it was important to examine closely individual occurrences of epistemic expressions and determine their interpretation. It would also have been exciting to investigate in more detail the two types of American consciousness mentioned in section 2.1 and which are extensively described by Reich (1971), and try to pinpoint the linguistic means used to describe each of them as contrasting with each other. Moreover, it could also be exciting to investigate other types of epistemic expressions and make some generalizations as to the concepts and values they mostly refer to.

4.3 New insights

It is our hope that the present study has managed to illustrate how beneficial and insightful a linguistic analysis of a literary text can be for both the understanding of the text and the investigation of its social and cultural context. Any literary analysis is bound to be a subjective interpretation of a novel's messages and the cognitive and emotional world of its characters. Epistemic modality, epistemic stance and appraisal are the perfect tools to investigate a literary text, since it represents contextual interpretation of the propositions and assumptions characters in the novel make about their world and other characters in the novel, which we hope we succeeded to illustrate in our study.

In addition, we hope to have carried out a successful analysis of how language consists of a system that maps different forms of meanings, which are essentially based not only on the author's understanding of the world, but also on what readers perceive as available knowledge throughout the entire text.

It is also significant to point out that hopefully we also contributed with a bit of research to the cognitive-pragmatic approach to discourse, and the way characters' mental representations of their realities are part of an interplay of perspectives, which are not necessarily shared by all of them, but which make the readers eager to establish some common ground between their knowledge and the confrontational information that different voices in the novel continuously offer. Hence, we demonstrated that verbs of cognitive attitude do not only produce information and assertions about the world, but they can also guide our interpretation of the world by taking into account more than the contextual material the readers have available, thus making the reader more alert when engaging in the interpretation of discourse.

Ultimately, epistemic modality, verbs of cognitive attitude and the emotional assessments of the novel expose a key controversial issue Philip Roth takes up in *American Pastoral*: the validity of the American dream. We have the Swede's own perspective, together with other characters' input about the values he holds dear on the one hand; and we have Merry's belief-set, which defies these values, and offers us a critical perspective of American dream on the other. Whereas the verbs of cognitive attitude point to the beliefs and values that characters in the novel hold dear, epistemic modality indicates predominantly the manifestations of those beliefs in their real life. In addition, when we look at the characters' emotional life, we are able to notice the novel's protagonist having a different world of emotions from the ones present in the beginning of the novel; his American world is disrupted and questioned by new unconventional ways of life, specific of American historical context. Therefore, we conclude that the language in *American Pastoral* indeed serves the purpose of conveying particular messages, that there are reasons to doubt the legitimacy of the American dream, but that there are still no valid alternatives to it; and so we like to think that our belief that most literature has some sort of connection to a particular time and space in history has been demonstrated by our study.

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